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THE NATION

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DENIS BRIAN

"Probably No Relation. . . ."
Oliphant; Washington Star

PASSAGE THROUGH INDIA
WHIP OF THE NEW RAJ
VED P. NANDA

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EDITORIALS

The Becalmed Campaigns

Amid predictions based on polls and registration figures that the voter turnout for this year's Presidential elections may be even lower than the 56 per cent who voted in 1972, the New Hampshire and Massachusetts primaries draw near (February 24 and March 2, respectively). The notable feature of the campaigning in both those states by the candidates of both major parties is the calm, even sleepy, atmosphere in which it has been conducted. From the viewpoint of those who feel that the country's health is poor and that much needs to be done to improve it, the most disheartening thing about the campaign so far is the failure of the Democrats to present a clear and striking alternative to the do-nothing "programs" of the Republican candidates.

Messrs. Ford and Reagan, those twins of the GOP's right wing, are both running against the federal government—"government intervention," as Reagan puts it; "the petty tyranny of federal regulations," in Gerald Ford's words (*The Washington Post*, February 10). They choose to overlook the fact that their party has controlled the White House for all but eight of the last twenty-three years, and in a period when Presidential power was at its height. Mr. Ford's men have put it about that the attribute he is displaying is "competence," but complacency would be a better word for a President who tells people, including at least 8 million unemployed, that they should accept and be content with the snail's pace recovery of the badly damaged economy.

This kind of approach, except for the gall of it under present conditions, is to be expected from the Republicans. What is incomprehensible is that the Democrats running for President have allowed their opponents to set the terms of the argument. Most of them seem to have accepted the "popular wisdom" that the country is in a conservative mood, and afraid of federal intervention in the management of the economy and, therefore, willing to wait out the storm, relying on "free private enterprise" to solve all the problems. This view, we think, rests on a misreading of the polls and of the public mood. The prevailing apathy is based much more on lack of faith in what the political leadership can accomplish. In the words of the pollster Patrick Caddell, the public is in an almost clinical state of mind—what he calls "a spiritual and psychological depression."

The few Democratic candidates who dare to recall the positive accomplishments of the New Deal do so almost apologetically, and shrink from the inflationary impact of what used to be called "pump priming" and from the controls that would have to accompany any new version of it. And so their voices are muted and their "programs," such as they are, threadbare. They seem to be saying that they could run a Nixon-Ford kind of economy better than the Republicans. It is no wonder that yawns are more evident than hurrahs along the campaign trail.

As John Kenneth Galbraith wrote recently (*New York* magazine, December 22), the Democrats fall into a trap dug by the Republicans when they accept the orthodoxy of simple tax cutting, which brings in its train drastic cuts in services. It is, says Galbraith, "a slightly modified version of the Hoover trickle-down doctrine." Instead, the Democrats should be campaigning for programs that would "employ people on useful work, maintain or improve public services, provide help to the large cities, prevent layoffs, ease the burden of state and local welfare costs." There is, regrettably, little evidence that the Democrats are ready yet to heed this excellent advice.

Bribe Overruns

Every week produces a bumper crop of scandals about the corrupt activities of American business abroad, with the prize for crooked ingenuity usually going to defense contractors. Last week's blue ribbon must be awarded to Lockheed for spending so much money bribing foreign agents in its efforts to do business with their governments that it may not be able to repay the loans the U.S. Government guaranteed after a bitter battle in Congress. Lockheed was sliding toward bankruptcy in 1971 when Congress magnanimously rode to the rescue of this splendid example of free private enterprise and voted to guarantee bank loans up to a total of $250 million (in fact, it has borrowed $195 million). That the Japanese Government, badly shaken by the bribery scandal, seems about to cancel a $1.3 billion contract with Lockheed will hardly help this wretched company's credit rating.

It now appears that a very large part of Lockheed's "cost of doing business" has gone for bribes. The company admitted last summer that recent payments for "sugar" (the subtle code word of one of its agents in Colombia) have amounted to at least $22 million. The General Accounting Office puts the figure for what Lockheed prefers to call "kickbacks" at $24.4 million. A prudent assumption would be that the real figure for this wholesale corruption in the foreign arms trade by the country's largest defense contractor is substantially higher.

So what Congress accomplished by its "bailout" of this corrupt, corrupting and patently inefficient company was to make it possible for Lockheed to rush around the world ladling out cash to "overcome resistance in the government dependencies," as another agent put it. In the process, the company seems to have done $12.6 million worth of bribing in Japan, and the trail runs through Turkey, Colombia, Mexico and the Netherlands, to cite a few countries whose nationals have thus far been named in the dirty business. In the Dutch case, Prince Bernhard, the husband of the Queen, has been identified as Lockheed's bribee, but there are intimations that he may have "assigned" the tip to a cause dear to his heart like the World Wildlife Fund.

Serious students of the American arms business long ago established the fact that these giant companies have about as much to do with free private enterprise as do their Russian equivalents. Their only forms of competition are in the bribes abroad and pressures on the Pentagon and Congress at home (which produced another bonanza in 1971 when Lockheed got a $1 billion price increase for its work on the infamous C-5A and other Air Force equipment). They should, of course, be nationalized and brought under the strict control of their main customer, the United States Government. That might make it a little harder for American arms salesmen to corrupt the governments of our "friends" abroad.

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A Dirty Trip for the Filthy Rich

The decision to allow the supersonic Concorde sixteen months of ear-shattering flights into American airports, if it is not blocked, will punish hundreds of thousands of Americans who live near New York City and Washington for national sins for which they bear no responsibility. Those sins, if that is not too large a word, have to do with American commercial greed which forced, or bribed, our friends abroad to accept the products of our technology, at the expense of their own industries. This process was so advanced and had gone on so long (especially in weaponry imposed on our NATO allies) that inevitably we were going to pay the price of it one of these days. That day has now come, and the price for the unlucky neighbors of Kennedy and Dulles Airports includes thunderclaps four to six times a day, plus for people everywhere a statistically measurable increase in skin cancer because of the SSTs' depletion of the protective layer of ozone.

We live in an age when it is looked on as folly or crime to stand in the way of "progress," whatever its nature. In the case of the supersonic transport, the progress is minimal, if indeed it is not negative. Military planes have long been able to match the speed and exceed the reach of these monstrous vehicles of luxury travel. No one has been able to make a case for the value of flinging jet setters and expense-account businessmen across the Atlantic in three hours and thirty minutes. It may be titillating to arrive in New York before you have left London or Paris, but what earthly, or heavenly, use is it?

It is obvious enough from Secretary of Transportation Coleman's statement announcing this trial period for the Concorde that diplomatic considerations played the major role in his decision. The British and French have unwisely sunk some $3 billion into the plane, largely for reasons of national prestige. If the United States had said "no" to their landing here, after our planes had dominated the international air transport skies for all these years, it would have caused a good deal of bad feeling between us and these two allies. In the words of Mr. Coleman, it would not have promoted the cause of "international fairness and understanding," and the Concorde's backers would have attributed the negative decision to "an arbitrary and protectionist attitude of the United States." His argument, basically, is that we owe it to the French and British to give them a crack at proving that, in actual use, their Concorde is not as horrible as the environmentalists say they can already demonstrate it is.

Secretary Coleman was in an unenviable spot. He had the technical bureaucracies of three countries lined up in favor of the Concorde (though our own was somewhat divided). The powerful forces that were at work are really beyond the grasp of an official whose real job it is to oversee the creaky American transportation system. There was no chance that he could satisfy all the pressure groups working on him. Nevertheless, he made the wrong decision, for both environmental and practical reasons. In 1971, Congress, after a hard battle, made the Nixon administration drop its plans for an American SST by refusing to fund its enormous development costs. Now, if the Concorde is judged a "success," commercially or otherwise, powerful pressures will build up for an American supersonic transport plane—much larger, half again as

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fast, twice as environmentally objectionable. And the American aircraft industry will know how to impose it on the whole world of air travel. That unattractive prospect could be one of the consequences of Secretary Coleman's trial license for the Concorde. Unsafe at any speed, as Ralph Nader once said.

The Ford in Gene's Future

When the Supreme Court threw out some of the "reform" provisions of the 1974 federal election law, it became possible once more for a candidate to put up any amount of his or her own money for a political campaign. Shortly thereafter, Eugene McCarthy chose William Clay Ford as his Vice Presidential running mate for his Presidential campaign on an independent ticket. Mr. Ford, a grandson of the original Henry and an executive of the family firm, is reputed to be worth something like $100 million. This fortune could make it possible for the McCarthy candidacy to become visible and even serious (though the law would seem still to require that the Ford money go for *his* candidacy, not that of the head of the ticket—a distinction without much enforceable meaning).

This is not to say that McCarthy advanced his challenge to the legality of the 1974 law (along with Senator Buckley, Stewart Mott, the ACLU and others) merely with the crass aim of having restrictions on political "angels" removed for his own benefit. The fact is that his 1968 challenge to Lyndon Johnson and his war in Vietnam would have been almost impossible if the now-removed limits on individual contributions to campaigns had been in effect. And it is true, as the ACLU has vigorously maintained, that the 1974 law places heavy obstacles in the way of minor parties and insurgencies of all kinds, to the great advantage of the two major parties and of all incumbents in Congress. The Court's rather cloudy decision is a clear gain for those who would challenge the political system from outside its orthodoxies, though the limit on individual contributions still hampers them more than it does the major parties.

Now, once again, the William Clay Fords (and the Motts and Rockefellers, Buckleys of New York, Metzenbaums of Ohio, Monks of Maine, Littons of Missouri, et al.) are free, within limits any lawyer can straddle, to spend and spend, if not elect and elect, to cite the conservatives' line against FDR in the 1930s—though what they meant then was taxpayers' funds spent to buy voters through horrendous programs like fiscal pump priming and jobs in the public sector when unemployment was general.

It is not clear yet what Mr. McCarthy will do politically with the Ford bonanza, if that vein of wealth is really opened up for him. He has been saying quite pleasant things about Gerald Ford lately, reserving the barbs of his wit for Democrats and the system in general. He remains hostile to the inflated Presidency and the dominance of military considerations in American foreign policy. Programmatic he never was, and voters will be left, as they were in 1968, to figure out for themselves what he would actually do as President. Mistiness was part of his allure eight years ago when the clearest thing about him was his opposition to the war. His very vagueness, his refusal to be specific on forms of possible Presidential action, attracted support from all over the political spectrum, much of it quite conservative. But it is possible to guess that, if his independent candidacy now becomes serious, rather than symbolic, he will draw votes from the disaffected and the Left of the Democratic Party, while George Wallace, if he too runs as an independent, will take support from the "alienated" and Right sector of the Democrats' normal constituency. That combination, if it is large enough, could assure the victory of a candidate as eccentric as Ronald Reagan, representing the minority of a minority party.

Given his record, it is doubtful that McCarthy would be entirely pleased with that result. But it should be said that it is not at all out of the question if William Clay Ford buys him a new and golden lute.

Chinese Checkers

It is possible to understand, without sympathy, the President's reported irritation at Richard Nixon and the Chinese Government for concocting the former President's trip to China on the eve of the primary election season. Just when Gerald Ford will be strutting in slippery New Hampshire, looking as Presidential as ever he can, his disgraced predecessor, the possessor of that hasty pardon Mr. Ford gave him, will be lifting glasses of rice wine with the leaders of Communist China for all the world (including Ronald Reagan) to see.

While President Ford is doing his magisterial best in, say, Gilmanton Iron Works, N.H., "President" Nixon will be playing guest of honor in Peking. No wonder Gerald Ford is vexed by this extremely public reminder of the dreadful past. Détente, a diplomatic flower which bloomed after Richard Nixon's first visit to China, is under increasing attack from the political Right. Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, whose hard-line views sit well with Reagan, writes in this month's *Fortune* magazine that it is a snare and a delusion to substitute vague understandings with Peking for much more military hardware when it comes to "national security" and dealing with the tough Russians. The Nixon visit will undoubtedly cause the national securitists to remind us that the opening to China and the ensuing relaxation of relations with Russia have not ended every possible danger in the world.

As for why the Chinese invited America's national embarrassment to drop in for a visit just at this moment, one can only muse on the Middle Kingdom's famous inscrutabilities. The obvious conclusion (therefore probably wrong) is that it is meant to needle the Ford administration into more formal relations with Peking and to do something to diminish the American connection with Taiwan. It is hard to see how it would have that effect. Or it may simply indicate that the Chinese do not take their relations with the United States very seriously and so can afford to amuse themselves by affronting public opinion here. Nixon's motives for accepting this Peking holiday are characteristically self-centered and not worth the ink to discuss them.

The Khaki Union Card

When just three years ago the United States Government took the easy way out by ending the draft and adopting the all-volunteer policy for the country's armed forces, sighs of relief were breathed on Capitol Hill and in the seats of power. No more draft, no more citizen soldiers with their troublesome links to the rest of a troubled

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society. From now on Americans in uniform would be professionals, people who had freely chosen to serve the colors and therefore subject to unquestioned discipline. But, as David Cortright points out in this issue (p. 206), things have not developed in the tranquil way the brass foresaw. Instead, unionization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen is now a real possibility and the old-time chain of command may soon be tied in bureaucratic knots.

The whole idea of military men as union members is a fantastic one for veterans of past service in war or peace. Unquestioning obedience and no inherent "rights" were the order of the day for what the British call "other ranks." Now it seems that, as an unforeseen consequence of the volunteer force, the allegiance of the men in uniform has been divided between obedience to the hierarchy of command and the prudent self-interest of the ranks as a collectivity. At least two labor unions are working hard to take advantage of this split. They seem to be making progress despite a generally horrified reaction on the part of the military authorities.

The union working most diligently to organize the servicemen, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is hardly a firebrand organization. It is conservative, "management"-minded and concentrated on material benefits for its members. Its president, Clyde Webber, says his union's aims are "limited to the more pragmatic" ("economic") side of life in the armed services, and Cortright quotes his curious remark that "questions of war and peace 'must be relegated to the aggregate of the American public opinion.' " In this era of Presidential wars, when not even Congress has had much to say about war and peace, that statement will have a certain resonance in the Pentagon's brass section.

An all-volunteer force, it must be said, was not the Pentagon's idea. In fact, the Defense Department fought the notion for years and accepted it reluctantly only when it became politically inevitable. The services' great fear was that, without conscription as a spur to enlistment, they would never be able to raise enough manpower. As it turned out, a pay scale lavish by any former standard, combined with high unemployment, made military service attractive enough to more than fill the ranks. If the unions succeed in organizing the men in uniform to any great degree, pay and benefits are certain to rise still further. (Can one imagine a strike by, say, members of the Seventh Army in Germany as their union bargains with Gen. Alexander Haig over pay and "working conditions?")

Many opponents of the all-volunteer concept, including ourselves, resisted it in part because they feared the effects of a professional military force isolated from the rest of the society and subject to the orders of an almost unchecked Commander in Chief in the White House. The specter of career soldiers, led by career officers and with interests separate from those of the rest of us, carried the mind back to earlier republics overthrown by military castes. That we ended up with such a military force is largely attributable to the reluctance of the American middle class, as represented in Congress, to do its share of the dull and dirty work of "national security." It was a kind of cop-out in which the educated and affluent chose to leave the task of national defense to the uneducated and relatively poor, and it was a bad bargain, socially and politically.

Nevertheless, the all-volunteer system is in place and it is impossible to imagine the country going back to a conscription system except in the case of a major (and this time constitutionally "declared") war. One of the consequences of the present arrangement is the growing movement to organize the military along labor union lines, to make soldiers and sailors just a part of the federal bureaucracy. The effects of this on the combat efficiency of the American armed forces are still not clear. But, as Cortright notes, one result may be to reconnect the enlisted ranks in the military to the society at large, thus checking a possible dangerous drift toward a kind of praetorian independence.

PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY

THE IMPERIAL FRONT MAN

CARROLL KILPATRICK

Among the agencies of government whose powers and responsibilities have grown far beyond the original expectation or intent, the office of Presidential press secretary is the one that most persistently intrudes itself on the public's attention. Now, as frequently happens to such runaway agencies, it is attracting critical notice. A recent study by the Professional Relations Committee of the National Press Club concluded that the White House should undertake a "re-examination" of the "proper role of the press secretary as an official government 'spokesman.' " The committee said that the press secretary in recent administrations had become the "victim of manipulation" by senior policy officials. The Press Club committee gave no guidance as to how a "re-examination" should be conducted or where it should lead, except to say that it supported "the principle of direct and sustained access to policy level officials—particularly the President, the assistant to the President for national security affairs and the chief of staff."

Nearly every Washington correspondent—and many high officials—would agree that the White House press secretary's role as government spokesman is in urgent need of re-examination. The Constitution says nothing about a press secretary; indeed, there is nothing in the Constitution to suggest that a President must speak to the press. But in recent years the press secretary has become one of the most important voices in government. As well as being the liaison between the White House and the Washington

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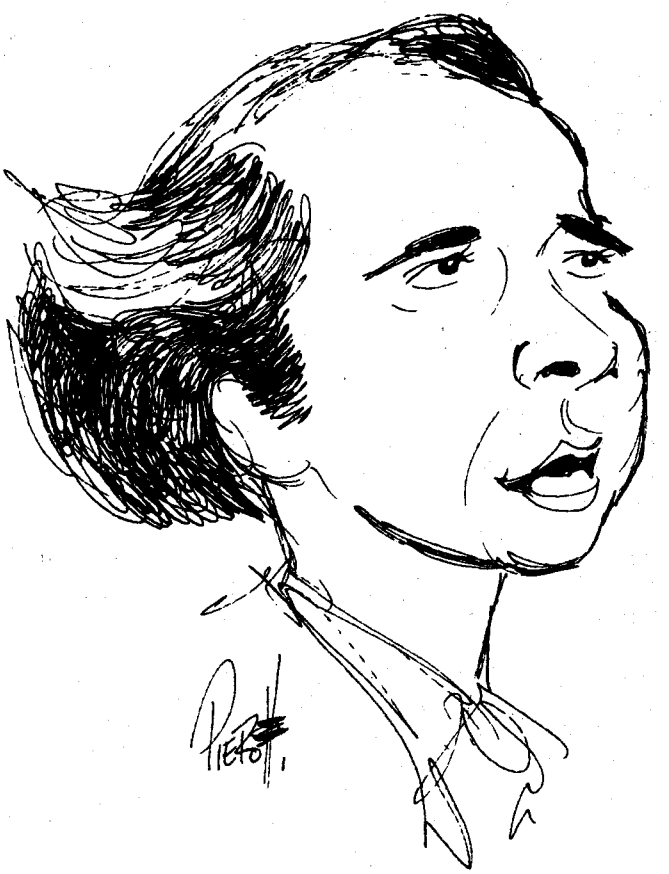
reporters, he often acts as spokesman for the entire government, speaking for agencies about which he has little knowledge. He does not take precedence over a Cabinet officer in the protocol lists, but many White House press secretaries have exercised more power than a Cabinet officer. Today, few members of the Cabinet would challenge the press secretary's authority to tell them how to conduct themselves in public.

In the first 150 years of the Republic there was no such thing as a White House press secretary. Joseph Tumulty, Wilson's lone secretary, might be called the first, for he handled press relations as well as patronage and Presidential appointments. Stephen T. Early was the first press secretary so designated and the first of consequence and influence; under Franklin D. Roosevelt, he ran the office for nearly twelve years with one or two assistants and a few secretaries.

Since then, with the growth of government, the expanded role of the Presidency, the advent of television and the general proliferation of the communications industry, the press office has not only grown in size but in influence and scope. The comparatively small office of the Roosevelt, Truman and even Eisenhower years would no longer be sufficient to meet the constant demands made upon it.

But the issue is the role of the press secretary, not the size of his staff. James C. Hagerty, an extremely efficient press secretary for eight years under Dwight D. Eisenhower, began the process of expanding the press secretary's role—and that of the White House in public relations—when he instructed press secretaries attached to the various government agencies to send any significant announcement to him, so that he could issue it in the President's name if he so chose. That was a signal to Cabinet officers to keep a low profile—a message that has been repeated with increasing emphasis in the last fifteen years. Lyndon Johnson once summoned all the departmental press officers to the White House and personally berated them for not doing more to build him up. He demanded that they send all important statements to the White House in advance of release so that he could grab any that he wanted to make himself. In the Johnson years, even reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics began to be released at the White House. This, of course, was a part of the rapid movement toward centralization of authority in the Executive. Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon all bear a heavy responsibility for the shift.

But even in the FDR days, when much power was exercised by the White House, Cabinet officers still made news. They had authority and they had a degree of independence that no longer exists. Almost every Cabinet officer in the Roosevelt administration held regularly scheduled press conferences. The Secretary of State held a press conference every day of the week except Sunday. Today no Cabinet officer has a regularly scheduled press conference, and most call them only rarely. Each has a press secretary, whose principal job is to fend off reporters, and each of these press officers regularly consults with the White House press secretary to determine what he or his Cabinet officer should say. In none of the administrations of the past fifteen years has a President encouraged a Cabinet officer to exercise independent judgment in his handling of public relations or to make news without first consulting the White House staff. In the Nixon administration, especially, the Cabinet became little more than an adjunct to the White House staff, and Cabinet officers dealt much more often with a Nixon assistant than with the President himself. Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Ziegler handled these routine contacts, frequently giving the Cabinet members their orders.



Ron Nessen

At the beginning of the Nixon years a new communications office was established in the White House under the direction of Herbert Klein, a long-time Nixon aide. He intervened directly in all agencies of government to establish a clear Nixon line. He established communications with editors throughout the country and with various special-interest groups. The office is now a direct part of the White House press office, with a director who bears the title of deputy press secretary. The office oversees government information policy, works directly with editors and broadcasters outside Washington, and helps arrange state and regional meetings where the President and other high officials explain and defend administration policy.

Vietnam and Watergate, which are blamed for most current ills, also must bear much of the responsibility for the concentration of attention on the White House press secretary as the government spokesman. In the Vietnam

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years, when LBJ tried to avoid press conferences, and in the Watergate years, when Nixon did avoid them for months at a time, reporters questioned whom they could. The obvious target was the White House press secretary, who until Watergate was available for briefings twice a day. Now the briefings are held once a day. When a President avoids newsmen someone fills the void, and during the Vietnam and Watergate years of crisis it was the press secretary. His words made the headlines; his face on the evening news shows became familiar to millions. Instead of the President or a responsible Cabinet officer, it was the White House press secretary who most often enunciated official policy, sent up trial balloons or responded to criticism from Congress and the public.

Such a procedure would have been unthinkable even a quarter-century ago. Up to and including the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, the President and the Cabinet officers were the authentic government spokesmen. FDR held press conferences twice a week—Truman once a week. FDR held 998 press conferences in twelve years, or an average of eighty-three a year; Nixon held thirty-seven in five and a half years, an average of fewer than seven a year.

President Ford has made himself regularly available to reporters, and the National Press Club study commended him for restoring regular White House press conferences and for granting dozens of interviews. Yet he has averaged less than one press conference a month in Washington. He has held about one every two months outside the capital. He has, in addition, granted more than fifty interviews to journalists during his brief period in office. But despite this record, far better though it is than Johnson's or Nixon's, reporters who have daily deadlines must go to someone else for their raw material, and they congregate in the White House press room late every morning to bombard Ron Nessen with questions on every conceivable subject, from Angola to SALT, from farm policy to crime in the nation's capital, from whether Mrs. Ford will accompany the President on his next trip, to why the President prefers a House bill on water pollution to the Senate version.

There have been widespread complaints in the press about Nessen's performance, but it must be acknowledged that he has an impossible task. Even as late as the Eisenhower administration many press briefings lasted five or ten minutes on normal days and were concerned primarily with scheduling, the timing of releases, travel arrangements, the preparation of messages to Congress. Now substance is the main interest at the press secretary's briefing. Even though he cannot be informed on all matters of policy, reporters keep trying to pin him down, to get him to commit himself, and the briefings normally last at least half an hour and often an hour or more. In addition to preparing for the briefing, the press secretary is supposed to meet informally for background discussions with individuals who regularly cover the White House, to meet and brief visiting editors and broadcasters, to supervise planning for all Presidential travel, to attend as many staff meetings in the White House as time permits and to confer frequently with the President himself.

"I saw two men killed in that job, Charles Ross and Joe Short [in the Truman administration]," columnist Marquis Childs once said. "It is inhuman. One hundred and fifty telephone calls a day that have to be personally attended to, the briefings, and that pack of wolves outside waiting to pounce on you."

Nessen obviously needs all the help he can get—more Presidential news conferences, more by Cabinet members, more by the experts who advise the President. He has recently appointed a deputy press secretary who is well informed on domestic issues. Nessen needs this kind of help so that he can spend more time with reporters and in running his large shop. He should stop trying to be the government's spokesman and should appeal to all the top officials from the President down to resume the responsibility for explaining, defending and advocating official policy that is rightfully theirs. The whole government would function better, and certainly in a more democratic spirit, if they would do so. But how would Mr. Ford, or any President after him, feel about that much free speech and free press? □

RECIPE FOR THE ECONOMY

THE SALT OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISE

DEREK SHEARER

> The economic system does not work. And the reforms required to make it work—to make it work uniformly and for individuals, not the corporations—are far more fundamental than anything contemplated by the cheap and soft and easy-going liberalism of these last years.
>
> *John Kenneth Galbraith* in *Who Needs the Democrats?* (1970)

Two years ago, during the worst period of the inflation and recession, *Business Week* ran a cover story, illustrated with portraits of the great economic thinkers of the past—Marshall, Marx, Smith, Keynes and others—speculating on when, or whether, a new theorist would appear to unravel the economy's conundrums. But an explanation of current difficulties is not apt to be found in some new, all-embracing theory. To find answers to the basic flaws in the American economy, we must look beyond economics to political economy.

For example, most economists agree that inflation could

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be decreased if productivity were to rise faster than prices. The problem, then, is to raise productivity. It has been recognized that one way to do so is to give workers a more satisfying work environment. And Paul Blumberg writes in *Industrial Democracy: The Sociology of Participation*:

> There is hardly a study in the entire literature which fails to demonstrate that satisfaction in work is enhanced or that other generally beneficial consequences accrue from a genuine increase in workers' decision-making power. Such consistency of findings, I submit, is rare in social research.

Blumberg says it well, but his conclusion has been known for decades. A number of business writers, Peter Drucker and Douglas MacGregor among them, have exhorted American managers to allow workers greater decision-making power. Yet, save for a few experiments in small or very new plants, American managers continue to insist on hierarchical, authoritarian work arrangements.

Do managers act this way for sound economic reasons? Prof. James O'Toole of the University of Southern California Business School explains that in America managers are a professional class whose loyalty is to themselves and to their own status and power. They have no wish to share that power with workers, even if doing so would mean a dramatic rise in productivity. The outlook of American management cannot be altered by traditional economic fine tuning or by some new economic theory: it will be changed only be educating new managers and new workers and, above all, by political struggle on the part of workers themselves for a share of management power.

Another solution to inflation that many economists mouth is competition: we need to increase competition in the economy so that prices will fall as well as rise. Having said that, these same economists neglect to specify how competition is to be increased. Many look toward antitrust, not asking why the antitrust laws that have been on the books for more than fifty years have not checked the concentration of economic power. Why do advocates of competition offer no realistic program for actually achieving their goal?

Again, it is a matter of political economy. John Blair, former counsel for the Senate Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee, shows in *Economic Concentration* that oligopolistic control of major industry is not economically or technologically inevitable. In practice, such bigness has been brought about partly by government policy which is shaped by the big corporations acting through their lobbyists and the politicians whom they support. The politics of remedying our problems are inseparable from the economics. There are no purely economic solutions.

Thurman Arnold, who headed the antitrust division of the Justice Department from 1938 to 1943, one of its periods of most vigorous activity, believed the antitrust laws actually aided concentration by satisfying the popular taste for anti-corporate ritual without changing anything. He wrote:

> By virtue of the very crusade against them, the great corporations grew bigger and bigger, and more and more respectable. . . . The reason why these [antitrust] attacks have always ended with a ceremony of atonement, but few practical results, lay in the fact that there were no new organizations growing up to take over the functions of those under attack. The opposition was never able to build up its own commissary and its service of supply. . . .

Instead of creating new economic institutions to rival or replace the large corporations, the government opted for regulation. It is, in fact, more accurate to say that the corporations *persuaded* the government to regulate. The major firms in regulated industries have welcomed regulation as a way to insure profits and outlaw so-called "cutthroat" competition.

The only other available course of action, one little tried in America, is public enterprise. In itself, the idea is no panacea. A Conservative government in Britain was quite willing to nationalize Rolls-Royce when it went bankrupt. Here, the federal government will float loans to tottering aerospace giants and President Ford endorses the idea of a public corporation to develop the nation's energy resources. In Eastern Europe and Russia, where much of the economy is publicly owned, an elite class of managers and party politicians rules; neither political nor economic democracy exists.

Public enterprise will work in the United States only if the government is run by people who represent the majority of Americans. The Post Office is continually cited by businessmen as an example of the inability of public enterprise to do an efficient, economic job. Who was the recent head of the Post Office corporation? Elmer Klassen, a big businessman, former chairman of Continental Can. And the directors are all businessmen or rich professionals. Ron Kessler's investigative series in *The Washington Post* last year found that Klassen and his associates generate most of the mismanagement. It's almost as if they wanted the Post Office to provide poor service and thus prove the case against public enterprise.

"Ownership, whether public or private, is merely an element of framework," notes British economist E.F. Schumacher. "It does not by itself settle the kind of objectives to be pursued within the framework."

To design a strategy of political economy that can deal effectively with the American situation, one must first specify what the framework is intended to accomplish. A democratic economy should—as a fact of its everyday operation—provide basic economic rights to all citizens, rights which were more or less stated in 1944 in FDR's Economic Bill of Rights—rights to a decent paying job, to adequate housing, to education, to medical care, to a secure old age. To this list should be added the right to participate in decision making in all of society's institutions and particularly at the workplace.

A democratic economy should increase not decrease choice. People should be free to buy various consumer items, even frivolous ones, as long as basic goods and essential services are equally available. The economy should be geared toward the maximum free choice feasible within a sane ecological framework. It should encourage a high degree of equality of income and wealth. This is not a description of Utopia but a set of goals which a humane economy should be organized to deliver.

If the American economy is to be so transformed that it begins to resemble a democratic economy, public control of the economy must grow substantially. Public control

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need not mean total or even extensive public ownership, particularly of the nationalization variety. "The objective is not wholly to destroy private ownership," wrote British Labour Party Minister C.A.R. Crosland, "but to alter its distribution."

Ownership of business enterprise should be more heterogeneous and diffused, with the government—state and local, as well as federal—unions, churches, pension funds, workers, community groups and private families all participating. If the United States is to approach such a pluralist economy, it must effect a dramatic increase in public enterprise, as well as in cooperatives, community development corporations and worker-owned enterprises.

Public control of the economy will also entail more explicit economic planning. Establishment figures ranging from economist Herbert Stein to investment banker Robert Roosa have recently recognized the limitations of Keynesian policies; they advocate the creation of a national economic planning agency.

However, the experience of European countries suggests that national economic planning works only where there is a large public sector. Andrew Shonfield concludes in *Modern Capitalism*:

> What is called "indicative planning," that is a system which relies on pointing out desirable ends rather than on giving orders to achieve them, can be relied upon to work effectively only in a situation where there is a central core of important enterprises which are more responsive to the desires of the state than ordinary private firms.

In France, where the major banks and insurance companies, an auto firm (Renault), an aviation firm, as well as coal, electricity, gas, railroads and telephones are publicly owned, national economic planning of the noncoercive variety has worked with a good measure of success. Attempts at similar planning in Britain, which has a smaller public sector and one concentrated in utilities, have not produced very good results. Recognizing this fact, the current Labour government has proposed that planning agreements be drawn up between the government and the leading corporations, and that a state holding company called the National Enterprise Board be established to purchase controlling shares in twenty to twenty-five of the major firms in the country.

The existence of public firms in the leading sectors of the economy means not only that planners will be in touch with enterprises that are responsive to their signals but also that, because these firms are public, planners will have access to data from which they can judge the performance of private firms. Without such information, planners are in the position of American regulatory agencies that passively receive information provided by private firms, with little basis for judging the economic soundness of the information or of the investment plans which the private companies propose. Where such data exist the public has almost always benefited. It was the public disclosure by TVA of identical bids for electrical equipment that broke the G.E. price-fixing scandal.

The best explanation of the necessity for a large dose of public enterprise in a privately dominated economy has been expressed by Pasquale Saraceno, chief economist of Italy's Industrial Reconstruction Institute. IRI is a state holding company which owns three of Italy's largest banks, the national airline Alitalia, the main shipping companies, Italian radio and television, and most of the telephone system. IRI has built more than half of the country's highways. In manufacturing, it produces 60 per cent of Italian steel, owns the Alfa Romeo company and has interests in a number of engineering companies.

Saraceno argues that, as capitalist development progresses, competition is retarded by oligopolistic tendencies, and growth itself is restricted and distorted by structural deficiencies which the market mechanism alone cannot solve. Nor will these structural problems be resolved by Keynesian demand management. They manifest themselves in three basic conditions: structural unemployment, regional unemployment and underemployment, and sectorial underinvestment.

All these conditions exist in the American economy. Signs of uneven development are all around us. Some areas of the country are relatively rich in income and services, while others are poverty-stricken. Within regions, sections of cities are decaying while life in upper-class suburbs is the most affluent in history. Throughout American society, the distribution of wealth and income is grossly unequal and has changed little since the beginning of the century.

Not only are the benefits of growth unequally distributed, but the very content of economic growth is distorted. The social costs of growth—such diseconomies as pollution, industrial injuries, destruction of neighborhoods—are little considered. Far from being provided with a marketplace of numerous goods and services, consumers actually

Haynie, The Courier-Journal (Louisville)

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enjoy smaller and more trivial choices. We are offered hundreds of colors of lipsticks, but have no choice between the private auto and adequate mass transit. There are more medical shows on TV than there are decent health plans to choose among. In most cities, you can't shop at a farmers' market or a co-op; there is only the giant shopping center, which offers the same brand products from coast to coast.

Public enterprise combined with noncoercive planning can be used to bring much of the economy under public control without resorting to Soviet-style command planning. But the structure of activities within enterprise will decide whether workers enjoy democratic participation, whether external diseconomies are considered as costs of production, and whether consumers have a voice in the economics of the state. It is in such internal structure that the public enterprises of Western Europe have been deficient.

Clerks in the publicly owned French banks recently went on strike to protest working conditions and the authoritarian attitudes of top management. The nationalized industries in Britain have had consumer councils for years, but since these depend on the industry boards for staff and budget, they have no independence and can rarely criticize the industry. In Italy, neither workers nor consumers have much voice in the decision making of the firms that comprise the state holding company. In all three countries, public accountability is exercised mainly through parliamentary committees. This has prevented gross inefficiency and corruption in the public enterprises, but it is inadequate for the goal of a really democratic economy.

If new public enterprises are established in the United States, accountability through participation by workers and consumers will have to be built into their structures and operation. It is also necessary to consider the scope of a public enterprise strategy. The policy goal will determine the type and level of an enterprise—whether, for example, it is to be city-owned, rather than owned by the state or federal government. And some tasks will be handled directly by the government in the public interest.

In the short run, for instance, public enterprises need not be primarily concerned with the distribution of wealth and income. Over time, the distribution of income will be improved by more even development. However, quicker results can be obtained by adopting tax reform along the lines proposed by Philip Stern in *The Rape of the Taxpayer*. The Tax Justice Act of 1976, which embodies most of Stern's recommendations, will soon be introduced in Congress.

Tax reform, combined with greater attention to working conditions and workplace democracy, also opens a new approach to inflation. One of the stimulants to inflation is the attitude that everyone must get a share now; unions bid up wages in negotiations because they *know* how unjust the system is. If workers felt that sacrifices were made equally, they might well be more responsive to a "social contract." They might lower wage demands in exchange for tax justice and more freedom in the workplace, as well as limitations on executives' salaries. But such trade-offs are unlikely until the federal government is committed to real economic fairness.

New public enterprises should certainly be run democratically; but they cannot, by policy alone, eliminate hierarchy and assure participation. Workplace democracy will be introduced in most firms only when the workers themselves decide to exercise control. However, public control of the government, rather than simply the existence of public enterprise, can speed the process.

Through procurement practices, health and safety standards, etc., the government has enormous power to encourage the democratization of work in private firms. For the purpose of broadening consumer choice, public enterprise can break into the "conspiracy of silence" maintained among oligopolistic firms. Competitive public enterprises in major industries can force private companies to be more responsive to the real needs of society.

A combination of competitive public enterprises and a strong reform-minded government could foster the development of alternative economic institutions, thereby broadening ownership patterns. At the national level, a Co-op Development Bank (as proposed by the Cooperative League of the U.S.A.) could lend funds and make available technical assistance to a variety of producer-owned ventures. A national development banking system, currently being researched by Senator Kennedy's staff, could offer "front-end" capital to community development corporations in underdeveloped areas.

Each state could have a state-owned bank and insurance company. The province of British Columbia operates a successful insurance company and a financial institution, the B.C. Savings and Trust. North Dakota boasts the only state bank in this country, a legacy from the days when the Populist-oriented Non Partisan League governed the state.

A state bank could receive all or part of the state's tax money. It would act enterpreneurially, yet on sound financial principles, marketing its services aggressively and seeking customers by providing first-rate consumer services.

Similarly, a public insurance company would provide consumer-oriented service, instead of mystifying customers with fine print, as so many companies do today. The company's capital would be invested primarily within the state, as is done by the Wisconsin Life Fund, currently the only state-run consumer insurance program in the country.

Cities could establish their own banks or development funds, using city tax revenues as initial deposits. They could purchase urban land so as to control rationally the city's development; they would also help to create new city-based businesses, both public and private.

At the same time, the federal government should create a government-owned holding company, which would purchase controlling interest in a major firm in every leading industry. In addition, when a private firm asked for a subsidy, as Pan Am has done, the holding company could exchange the subsidy for some equity and a seat or two on the board. Rather than doling out public money to ailing private enterprises, as is the current practice, the government should see to it that the public gets something for its money. This would not mean that the holding company would automatically bail out every failing private firm; some inefficient firms should fail and other government programs such as public employment would deal with the displaced workers.

The Council of Economic Advisers should be broadened

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into a national economic planning agency, as Senators Humphrey and Javits have proposed. Planners would work in close communication with the new competitive public enterprises owned by the holding company, and the data provided by the public firms would give the government a sound basis for serious "jawboning" with private firms over their investment and pricing plans.

There is nothing visionary in this outline of a democratic economy. The policies described are to some extent in practice in other Western democratic countries or have been put forward in legislation as part of a militant reform program. The only thing novel here is the recommendation that the whole strategy of political economics be put forward in one embracing pattern. It is time that reformers in the United States, particularly the Democratic Party, stop nibbling at problems and heed Galbraith's words that the needed economic changes are fundamental, not cosmetic. □

PASSAGE THROUGH INDIA

WHIP OF THE NEW RAJ

VED P. NANDA

Personal affairs required me to travel to India again last month. As an Indian national and professor of international law at the University of Denver Law School, I had tried to keep myself well informed about affairs in India. I knew from following American press reports that Indira Gandhi's government had imprisoned many political opponents, and I had several times publicly expressed dismay at the trend of events under the declared state of emergency.

But little did I understand the extent to which the government was using repressive measures to stifle its opposition.

On arriving at the Delhi airport, I was detained for interrogation, although I carry an Indian passport and did not need a visa to enter the country. "What are you here for? Any political objective?," I was asked. "My mother has been ill. I came to see her."

I then told the interrogating official that as a law professor I had a Christmas holiday, which afforded me the time to travel to India. "Doesn't matter, we've detained professors of law under the emergency powers before." The official shrugged his shoulders and warned me that my activities would be closely watched.

During the next two weeks I had an uneasy feeling that at times I was being followed by intelligence officials. And when I was ready to leave India, I was faced with more bureaucratic hassles. "You don't have the necessary cholera inoculation. Your passport doesn't look authentic," I was told at the airport. I was relieved when I was finally permitted to board the plane.

What I saw and heard during my stay has made me realize that, in sharp contrast with the image which Indira Gandhi's government strives to project abroad, India, a showpiece of democracy for the first twenty-seven years of its independence, is fast becoming a repressive police state. The government has steadily tightened its grip on an already crippled and stifled press, which has buckled under harsh censorship laws. This accounts at least in part for the inadequate coverage of authoritarian measures now being employed by the government to silence both the political opposition and dissident elements within Mrs. Gandhi's ruling Congress Party.

Jagdish P. Mathur, secretary of the All India Jan Sangh, a major opposition political party, related to me several incidents of alleged police brutality in the treatment of political prisoners. I met with Mathur, an opposition leader sought by the police, who had up to that point escaped arrest and was very active in organizing the underground movement, to discuss these oppressive measures and the strategy of the opposition parties. Among the names of the victims Mathur gave me were those of many Delhi residents, some of whom had been released. A

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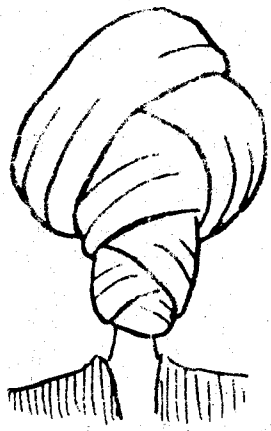
doctor, a lawyer, a university instructor, two student leaders and a businessman were those with whom I talked during the next few days to confirm Mathur's allegations.

They all told a similar story. The police applied crude means either to extract a confession to a nonexistent plot against Indira Gandhi or to seek information concerning the whereabouts and next moves of the organizers of the underground movement.

The devices for torture which are being used in police stations and jails in India are as varied as they are inhumane and revolting. The victims who talked with me related incidents where they or other political prisoners were hung upside down; were stripped naked and severely beaten with shoes, steel rods and gun butts; had burning candles applied to their bare soles, which were then punctured with nails; had chili powder smeared into their noses and other parts of their bodies; were kept awake while icy water was thrown on them on cold winter nights; were starved and even denied water; had rods tied to their necks, creating an intolerable strain on the spinal cord.

The doctor I met was not personally tortured. However, while he was in jail as a political prisoner, illegally detained on trumped-up charges, he had treated more than twenty prisoners who, he said, must have been "mercilessly beaten." The sole fault of the lawyer, arrested



BAS, Tachydromos (Greece)

on the charge of being a "hooligan," was, he said, that he had appeared in court on behalf of a political prisoner. A member of the Indian Supreme Court Bar Association showed me a resolution adopted by that organization which condemned police atrocities and harassment of attorneys defending opposition members. The Bar Association noted that even the families and relatives of such attorneys were not spared police wrath.

From Delhi I took a train to see my mother, who lives in the state of Punjab in northwest India. There I met a recently released leader of the opposition, Madan Gopal, a prominent businessman in the small town of Malerkotla. He was charged with plotting the violent overthrow of Indira Gandhi's government.

"I never met the informant, Vikram Singh, who reportedly overheard the alleged conspiracy," he said. For more than three months Gopal was detained in jail without even a court hearing.

Upon my return to Delhi in the third week of December, I saw two anti-government demonstrations (*Satyagrahas*). These were part of a countrywide movement launched by the united opposition last November 14. In a typical *Satyagraha,* individual demonstrators (*Satyagrahis*)—ranging from four to fifty in number—shout slogans against Mrs. Gandhi's government and pass out anti-government literature in busy streets. The demonstrators usually wear garlands, people assemble around them and, since the time and place are announced in advance, the police promptly arrest the demonstrators.

Each *Satyagraha* I saw in Delhi had about forty active participants who courted arrest and attracted more than 5,000 spectators. The crowds, predominantly opposition sympathizers, repeatedly shouted slogans demanding an end to the state of emergency, release of political prisoners and the restoration of civil liberties. In one case, the police resorted to a mild *lathi* charge (swinging long wooden poles and clubbing onlookers) before arresting the *Satyagrahis*.

According to opposition sources (whose information is hard to verify), more than 40,000 persons have courted arrest in cities all over India. They claim that the number of political detainees and *Satyagrahis* has exceeded 100,000, certainly not a small number even in a country of 600 million people.

The media in the West have been reporting on the steady erosion of civil liberties in the aftermath of the now six-month-old "emergency." But the press here, dependent upon Indian sources for its news, has suffered from the same censorship which now curbs the Indian press. As a result, it has virtually ignored two important developments in India—the mistreatment and torture of some political prisoners, and the *Satyagraha*.

These are significant developments because, until recently, political prisoners could be assured of humane treatment. Even the Indian independence leader and the father of the civil disobedience movement, Mohandas Gandhi (no relation of Mrs. Gandhi) and Mrs. Gandhi's own father, Jawaharlal Nehru, were themselves never mistreated in jails under the British rule. The actions of the Indian police toward political prisoners fly in the face of Indira Gandhi's protestations that she is defending and protecting democracy while her opponents are bent on destroying it.

Despite its substantial efforts, I found the opposition disorganized and demoralized. Its leaders were shocked by the suddenness of the declaration of emergency, as well as by the severity of the government's silencing measures. That initial shock is now followed by an equally grim realization that the "emergency" will continue much longer than had earlier been anticipated and that elections scheduled to be held in March 1976 will be postponed for a year, and perhaps for a longer time. (According to *The New York Times* of February 4, they can be postponed a year at a time as long as the emergency is in effect.)

The opposition does not seem to have a definite plan for a follow-up action to the *Satyagraha*, which ended in January. However, those with whom I spoke seem to understand well the need for a united front. "Either we build a united opposition party, resolving our differences, or we sink separately," is how one opposition leader put it.

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A blueprint has already been devised to merge several opposition parties. These parties—some of them on the right of the ruling Congress Party, others on the left—do not include Marxist parties which are split among several factions—the Moscow wing, the Peking faction and the Naxalites who stand even further to the left of those vowing allegiance to Peking.

Several opposition leaders are convinced that Mrs.

INDIRA GANDHI AND THE VILLAGE BOSSES

JAMES MANOR

In a recent address at Yale, India's Ambassador announced that Indira Gandhi's abandonment of electoral democracy had at last produced real progress toward social and economic equity for the rural poor of his nation. A student then asked why we should believe that the Congress Party, which had apparently made little headway toward this goal in more than a quarter-century of pre-eminence in Indian politics, could suddenly become a force for radical change. It is a question worth exploring.

The most important aspect of this or any political event in India is its impact upon the rural areas, where nearly 80 per cent of the population still lives. The dismay of educated urbanites is very real, very understandable and by now very familiar. But it is from the perspective of the villagers that Mrs. Gandhi's actions must ultimately be judged.

An analogy from the realm of religion will shed light on the relationship between decisions in New Delhi and events in the villages. Anthropologists have found that local practices in rural temples often diverge radically from the "Great Tradition" of Hinduism. For example, villagers in many areas pay only lip service to the high deities of the "Great Tradition," whose roles in Hinduism bear little concrete meaning for their daily lives. Yet these same villagers often lavish attention and alms upon deities known only locally, who are said to have powers to solve everyday problems such as disease or drought, but whose mythical roles stand at odds with higher Hindu teachings. The many localized "Little Traditions" at the village level often stand the India-wide "Great Tradition" of Hinduism on its head.

Something like this occurs in Indian politics as well. Mrs. Gandhi, like her father before her, has for years risen in Parliament to announce bold new laws to promote equality and eradicate caste in the countryside. As in Nehru's day, the Congress Party's majority in Parliament has acclaimed and passed these laws. State legislatures all across the subcontinent, most of which have also been under Congress's control, have generally followed suit. Thus is established the Prime Minister's socialist "Great Tradition." But in politics as in religion, by the time the "Great Tradition" percolates down to the village level, something very often goes awry.

Since the 1930s, the Congress Party has been controlled by the rich peasant castes which provide its power base. These groups rule at the village level in the hierarchical "Little Tradition" of rural India and they would suffer more severely than any other group should Mrs. Gandhi's radicalism be put into action. A redistribution of land and wealth would deprive them of much of their status and power. The eradication of caste would sweep away the governing principle of social relations in rural India.

The dominant castes, whose representatives in Parliament have cheerfully assisted the passage of Mrs. Gandhi's egalitarian laws, quietly sabotage their implementation. By intimidation and enticement, they prevent civil servants from applying these measures. Thus the "Great Tradition" of Indian politics fails to penetrate to the village level. Mrs. Gandhi is less the leader of the Congress Party than its prisoner.

One of the most outrageous examples of this has been the frustration of efforts to stamp out bonded servitude. Under this system, wealthy peasants lend money to their poorer neighbors at usurious rates. They then ensnare the poor or their children as unpaid workers to cover runaway interest which can never be paid off. A 1971 survey of villages in one of India's more advanced states found that although untouchables no longer had to give their daughters over in bond, the system which bore many of their sons away was as deeply entrenched as ever. A government report published in 1973 indicated that this form of servitude was a nationwide phenomenon.

Since the days of British rule, high officials have periodically announced all-out onslaughts on this pernicious institution and in October India's President (an ally of Mrs. Gandhi) decreed yet again that the "bonded labor system stands abolished with immediate effect."

This is even less likely to occur now than before the crackdown of last summer. The main perpetrators and beneficiaries of the bonded labor system are the wealthy peasants who control the Congress Party and prevent the implementation of progressive laws in rural areas. The suppression of the old open politics has strengthened these dominant castes by muzzling opposition to the Congress from without and by curtailing competition and renewal within the party.

Well-informed sources with access to the Prime Minister continue to insist that her expressions of concern for the rural poor are genuine. They even claim that she knows that her dependence upon the dominant castes must be broken if she is to translate her concern into action. This may be true and the state of emergency may spring in some obscure way from progressive motives. But after five months, it appears that the dominant castes have tightened their grip over rural India yet again and that the long-suffering villagers have less to look forward to than ever.

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Gandhi chose the totalitarian road at the urging of Russia. They kept reminding me of the large contingents of Soviet technical experts staying at the posh Intercontinental-Oberoi Hotel in New Delhi, who were "in fact counseling and advising her on the appropriate steps to lead India down the primrose path of 'guided democracy.' " This opposition charge, however, is largely unsubstantiated.

Mrs. Gandhi has in the past successfully used a foreign specter to rouse nationalist ire and sentiment. She has skillfully taken advantage of the CIA's involvement in Chile as a warning against possible foreign involvement in India's internal affairs. Similarly, she has occasionally invoked "potential threats" from China and Pakistan to externalize India's internal problems.

It is highly speculative to predict the course of events in India. For the time being, at least, democracy is in full retreat. Were elections to be held today, even the opposition leaders I met acknowledge that the ruling Congress Party would likely be a big winner. Among the many reasons for such an outcome would be: bumper agricultural crops in 1975 and a slowdown of inflation; general apathy of the rural masses, who comprise more than 75 per cent of the country's population; the strong-arm tactics of Mrs. Gandhi's government, which have frightened the electorate, and a general lack of faith in the ability of the opposition parties to work together.

Indira Gandhi still has a charismatic appeal to the illiterate masses (after all she is Nehru's daughter and her name is Gandhi) and a cult of personality has developed around her. Her son, Sanjay Gandhi, known as the *chhoti sarkar* (the mini-ruler) and reportedly being groomed by her to take over, is being merchandised aggressively both in political circles and in the media.

However, India's basic economic and social problems, especially those of land reform and explosive population growth, remain unsolved. And despite the government's propaganda that under the emergency people are more disciplined and productivity has increased, corruption is rampant and the masses are apathetic.

On reflection, the only healthy development for the Indian body politic I saw is the prospect of a unified opposition. Meanwhile, the diplomatic community in New Delhi and India's well-wishers at home and abroad are anxiously watching events, hoping that the current state of emergency is a temporary aberration, the end of which will once again herald the return of democracy in India. □

ORGANIZING THE MILITARY

'THE UNION WANTS TO JOIN YOU'

DAVID CORTRIGHT

"On the double, soldier!"
"Sorry, sarge, I'll have to speak to the shop steward first."

Washington, D.C.

The military services, still reeling from the turmoil of Vietnam and the transition to an all-volunteer force, are now confronted by a new challenge. Soldier unions, once a leftist fantasy, have reappeared under conventional and conservative auspices and have become a major topic of debate in the ranks. Two major AFL-CIO unions—the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the National Maritime Union—have publicly expressed interest in military organizing, and independent unionizing has already begun within the ranks. Though the concept of military unionizing may strike Americans as bizarre, soldiers' unions already exist or are under active consideration in nearly every major country of Western Europe. In Holland an often feisty draftees' union has operated for ten years and today boasts approximately 25,000 members. Unions are also active in the armed services of Germany, Sweden, Belgium and Norway and have been proposed in Britain and Italy. Even the tradition-bound French Army faces unionization. At present nearly fifty soldier activists and trade unionists are under indictment by a special French national security court for allegedly "demoralizing the army"—that is, for attempting to federate the existing network of soldier committees into a national union. The military union movement is on the march, and will not be easily brushed aside.

The reaction of the American military establishment to these developments has been predictably hysterical. News of the AFGE initiative, first carried in *The Wall Street Journal* (June 27, 1975), sent shock waves through the military and prompted cries of "sheer horror" from top Pentagon spokesmen. One Army general rejected "any organization which competes with the chain of command" and claimed that if the Army were to recognize a union it would "lose its effectiveness." Resistance has also started to build among military supporters in Congress, with public opposition voiced by Sen. John Tower (R., Texas) and Reps. William Dickinson (R., Ala.) and Samuel Stratton (D., N.Y.). The most strident hostility has been heard from professional military associations, which see unionization as a direct threat to their survival. The Fleet Reserve Association, Reserve Officers Association, Naval Reserve Association, American Legion, Air Force Sergeants Association and National Association for Uniformed Services have already vowed to fight a military union, and other organizations can be expected to follow suit. The most extreme reaction among these groups has been that of the Fleet Reserve Association. At its annual convention this past September the association adopted a resolution which warned that organized labor is "jeopardizing . . . military security through the erosion of military

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discipline." The 120,000-member career association budgeted $112,000 for a major anti-union campaign, most of the money to be spent on an intensified drive for new members—including, for the first time, noncareer sailors and Marines.

The idea of a military union was raised often during the early days of the GI movement. Soldiers opposed to the war in Vietnam made several attempts to establish a national association, the most important being the American Servicemen's Union, but these initiatives never evolved beyond the distribution of a newspaper and occasional scattered protests. Government hostility, leftist sectarianism and lack of money prevented any real union activity. Today the incentive comes not from the Left but from the conservative core of the AFL-CIO. Apparently the lure of more than 2 million unorganized military "professionals" is irresistible to growth-conscious unions eager to enrich their treasuries and expand their power. The Maritime Union began to show interest in the military just two months ago and so far has been extremely secretive about its intentions. AFGE has been more forthright and has frequently spoken in public. Therefore, this examination of the implications of unionization will focus on the AFGE, although the analysis applies generally to any AFL-CIO organizing among the military.

AFGE is an unlikely agent of anti-military or radical activity. In more than forty years of organizing government and military employees, the union has shown little sign of labor militance or anti-government protest. Indeed, it seems to avoid conflicts with the military hierarchy and has often adopted a cooperative, almost co-management posture. In testimony before the Defense Manpower Commission, for example, AFGE President Clyde Webber claimed that "the mood of management has mellowed" and stated that AFGE is now "helping management in the writing of their own regulations." Legal restrictions on federal unionism and the conservative bent of the union's leadership have prevented AFGE from mobilizing its mass membership or from exercising its enormous potential power. The union has a paid membership of approximately 325,000 and through bargaining arrangements represents some 675,000 federal employees. Its largest membership base is among civilian military workers, where it represents nearly 360,000 people. The AFGE also represents several thousand "civilian technicians"—dual-status employees who serve in the National Guard as civilians but are subject to military discipline—and this relationship has further strengthened the union's ties with the military services.

What principally stimulated the AFGE's interest in active-duty membership was the government's decision to link federal and military pay scales. The policy of "comparability" for the federal wage system and its recent extension to the all-volunteer uniformed force created a bond between GIs and civilian government workers and supplied an economic basis for AFGE's desire to organize service people. This factor has become especially significant in the last two years, as the government has tried to reduce spending by cutting personnel expenditures and federal wages. The pay scales have now begun to lag behind inflation and will almost certainly fall back further in the lean years that probably lie ahead. Faced with this erosion of its members' pay, AFGE is under considerable pressure to intensify its wage-bargaining activities and to strengthen its political influence—things it might best accomplish by drawing members from the military. Since AFGE in effect already represents military people in matters of pay, it's not surprising that it is now turning to formal GI membership.

In testimony before the Defense Manpower Commission last year, President Webber spoke of "the mutual benefits of bringing military personnel into AFGE" and reported that a top-level committee had been set up to prepare a recommendation for consideration by the union's membership. The decision on whether or not to seek military members will be made at the union's biannual convention next September. Although there have been reports of some skepticism and opposition within AFGE, a positive recommendation from the leadership would probably be approved. If the union decides to go ahead, as early signs suggest it will, actual organizing could begin as early as next fall.

The National Maritime Union has established a special committee to study the possibility of unionizing the military, and, while NMU's aims are unclear, the fact that it is involved at all indicates the strong appeal of the idea. In its hearing on the subject last August, the Manpower Commission took testimony from Richard Beaumont, a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, that the services can expect to be unionized by 1980. Beaumont, now president of a management consulting firm, claimed that "the concept of absolute command" is now unworkable, flatly asserting, "I do not believe the military has the capacity to contain unionization."

There seemed to be good grounds for his prediction. In the last ten months two unionizing campaigns were initiated that are unrelated to either the GI movement or the AFL-CIO. A "Union of Military Physicians" emerged last spring among U.S. officers stationed in Germany and has since grown to more than 400 members. And in December the 8,000-member Association of Civilian Technicians announced that it had begun to organize the weekend warriors of the Reserves and National Guard into an "Association of Guard and Reserves," with a stated membership goal of 100,000.

Much of the attraction of unionizing for service personnel is the result of the military's shift to an all-volunteer force. Recruitment appeals generally offer a rosy view of military service and have often created the mistaken impression that military life and working conditions are or can be similar to those in the civilian world. The slogan, "The Army Wants to Join You," is the clearest embodiment of this concept. When expectations clash with service reality, the new recruits became restive. From interviews with sailors in the San Diego area last year, the Defense Manpower Commission found, according to a *Navy Times* account, that unrest over policy changes and benefits cutbacks was "so high that the idea of unionization . . . came up frequently." Volunteer recruitment seems to encourage enlistees to see military service as a job like any other, and with typical trade union grievances arising often, the prospects for military unionizing grow brighter.

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Although the official reaction has been generally negative, some groups within the military have adopted a more restrained attitude toward unionization, and particularly toward the plans of AFGE. A source within the Defense Manpower Commission recently confided that some commanders seem fairly open to that union, apparently recognizing the inevitability of unionization and preferring AFGE to a potentially more militant organization. This more resigned attitude is probably sensible, for it is obvious that AFGE has no intention of disrupting the military *status quo*. Indeed, the kind of military union under consideration at AFGE would follow a narrow and conservative policy.

The main concerns of an AFGE military section (and probably of any other AFL-CIO union) would be pay and benefits—with major emphasis on annual cost-of-living increases. AFGE already spends a great deal of time lobbying for pay adjustments and would undoubtedly remind potential GI members that these activities are of direct benefit to them. In fact, AFGE has already started to mobilize GI support of its wage demands. Hundreds of thousands of leaflets have been distributed at military bases, urging service people to pressure Congress for a full cost-of-living pay increase. According to President Webber, GIs have responded with a "heavy letter-writing effort." Not that the AFGE is always successful. It won substantial Senate majorities for its wage demands in 1973 and 1974, but last year threats of personnel cutbacks prevented it from achieving a full comparability pay boost—a defect that could cloud union politics.

Beyond basic questions of compensation, AFGE has implied that it would address primarily professional and economic issues. Union officials refer most often to the problems of careerists, mentioning such concerns as pensions, military retirement and health-care benefits. In a recent *Army Times* magazine interview, Webber described AFGE as a "bread-and-butter union" and spoke forcefully about professional concerns: "We hear from military people who are toward the end of their career or retired, and they are just red hot. They talk about the loss of commissary privileges . . . about possible changes in health services. They want us to help them."

AFGE also attempts to preserve a conservative image by refusing to commit itself on larger questions of military policy. Webber and others avoid so-called "ideological" issues, claiming their aims are purely "economic." Answering fears that a military union might undermine military effectiveness, Webber told the Manpower Commission that "our primary objectives are limited to the more pragmatic" and that questions of war and peace "must be relegated to the aggregate of the American public opinion."

Although AFGE seems most interested in attracting careerists and officers, Webber and others have also said they would welcome first-termers and would be willing to become involved in the so-called "gripe" issues of the rank file. Representing Guard technicians, for example, AFGE has already become embroiled in several challenges over hair length and uniform requirements, and has argued that these men should be removed entirely from military discipline. While the union extends its welcome to first-termers, however, it has failed to discuss the grievances or challenge the service abuses that most directly affect GIs. Thus AFGE officials have been quiet about such matters as occupational health and safety (an increasingly important concern in the Navy), abuses of military discipline, or the capricious and arbitrary workings of military justice. Indeed the legal insurance plan now under consideration at AFGE would be a "joint contribution" program—an approach that would dodge employer-employee controversies and exclude military justice and work-related disputes.

But though AFGE's intentions may be mild, once it looks to the ranks it is likely to touch off unanticipated conflict and political dispute. That would be especially true if the union were to attract a substantial GI membership, and despite AFGE's leanings toward the career force, it will probably find that the liveliest interest comes from the lower ranks. The Defense Manpower Commission's discussions with sailors in San Diego and my own sampling of enlisted opinion in the Washington area suggest that first-term GIs are strongly attracted. Robert Nolan, executive secretary of the Fleet Reserve Association, recently noted the same phenomenon in a letter to Representative Stratton: "The support I found for the concept of a military union amongst junior personnel is absolutely astounding." While careerists may also sign up, they need union protection less than do GIs and they tend to be more loyal to the military institution. Moreover, most careerists are already organized and, if the Fleet Reserve reaction is any indication, are probably hostile to unionization. Thus a military union may find itself with an unexpectedly large GI membership.

No matter what the union may have in mind, Webber himself has admitted that the decision to unionize the rank and file could start a process over which the union might not have full control. In his interview with *Army Times* he spoke against strikes by military unionists, but added: "The thing about it is that you cannot control individual elements of an organization, whether it happens to be the U.S. Army, as has been demonstrated a couple of times in the last three or four years . . . or the AFGE. People take into their own hands what they think they have to." Once stimulated, the expectations of enlisted people could very quickly exceed bureaucratically imposed bounds and extend to more fundamental questions of GI rights and military discipline.

Unionization is likely to have such unforeseen consequences primarily because of the continued existence of widespread unrest within the services. The union issue has arisen at a time of pervasive discontent in the lower ranks. Despite reforms and claims of liberalization, the all-volunteer force has been troubled by persistent morale and disciplinary problems. Service-wide AWOL rates, for example, have soared to their highest level in modern history (eighty-six incidents per 1,000 enlistees in 1975), exceeding even the record levels of 1971. Court-martial and non-judicial punishment rates have also remained high, and less-than-honorable discharges have climbed to appalling levels. Last year approximately 80,000 service people were discharged less than honorably. That was nearly one out of every eight released—the highest rate of bad discharge in modern service history.

Thus far, proposals for a military union have had no

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connection with the older GI movement. Partly this is a result of the decline in organized political activity among GIs since the end of the war in Vietnam. Although general unrest within the barracks remains high, its expression in organized protest has declined sharply. The number of GI newspapers and organizing committees has dropped from a 1970-71 peak of more than 100 to a current level of approximately fifteen. Nevertheless, the GI movement retains some influence within the ranks, and through its newspapers and counseling services reaches tens of thousands of service people every month. If the various groups were to coordinate their activities and adopt a common approach to the union issue, they might be able to exert some positive influence on the direction of unionization. However, the isolation and vast geographical separation of current GI groups make any such agreement unlikely.

Ironically this disarray has come at a time when most of the remaining GI projects have independently adopted a trade union perspective. As the GI movement has moved into a peacetime, all-volunteer environment, its political focus has shifted from the mission of the military to more immediate problems of day-to-day life. The anti-imperialist emphasis of a few years ago, although still latent within many GI struggles, has been supplanted by a more pragmatic approach concentrated on service conditions and restrictions on personal liberty. Perhaps the most important example of this trade union emphasis is the struggle over oppressive working conditions in the Navy which sparked a work-stoppage (i.e., mutiny) aboard the *U.S.S. Midway* in mid-1974 and a similar walkout just six months ago in San Diego on the *U.S.S. Sterrett*. Another trade union controversy in the Navy is the current battle of enlisted technicians to restore canceled bonuses. More than 800 sailors at five separate bases have petitioned, filed suit and demonstrated for payment of bonuses or immediate honorable discharge. But although the activists in uniform have begun to raise trade union demands in their political struggles, they have so far made no attempt to link up with the emerging union movement. And military unionizing has elicited little or no organized response from the Left. The impetus for unionization has come primarily from established union bureaucracies.

It's difficult to predict exactly what kind of military union will emerge, or what its consequences will be. About the only thing certain is that American commanders, like their NATO counterparts, will soon be forced to deal with contracts and shop stewards. The result could be a breakdown in military discipline, or the creation of a pro-military lobby association, or any of a number of other possibilities. The immediate effect is likely to be fairly limited, with most union activity confined to pocketbook matters. Nonetheless, unionization could have a significant democratizing and civilianizing influence within the armed forces. It might increase the likelihood of internal questioning and resistance to illegal orders. To organize successfully, for example, an AFGE or Maritime union would have to fight for and achieve such freedoms as the right to distribute literature on base and the right to solicit members and engage in union activity. In effect they would attain on a wide scale the rights that individual GI movement groups have sought for years. (It is significant in this regard that much of AFGE's legal research so far has centered on First Amendment and political rights cases which grew out of the GI movement.) A union drive could also build important linkages between the military and civilian society and foster a healthy sense of independence among its members. Especially in an all-volunteer, professional force—with its danger of social isolation and excessive military fealty—the establishment of ties to the civilian labor movement and the emergence of loyalties to a separate organization would be healthy developments. □

PROFIT AND LINT

THE DUST IN WILLIE'S LUNGS

FRAN LYNN

Greensboro, N.C.

It is an odd sight: a man sitting in a plastic lawn chair, hoeing a back-yard garden. Every few minutes he rests the hoe between his knees, trying to catch his breath, and then he gets up to move the chair farther down the furrow. Sometimes he pulls along a funny-looking contraption—a wheelbarrow made out of a lawn mower, plywood and a metal washtub—into which weeds are tossed. But the rows of turnips along the garage are neat.

Willie Rappe is a retired textile worker who has spent more than fifty years in Southern mills. He began in South Carolina, where he was born, and attended school to the second grade. He then moved with his family to Danville, Va., and after twenty-one years in the mills of Virginia, moved again, to Greensboro, N.C., where he worked for the next twenty-two years until his retirement in 1973. He was then 63 years old.

Most of Rappe's relatives spent their lives in the mills: his father, mother, sister, two brothers, aunts, uncles, numerous cousins and his mother-in-law. He himself has held just about every job there is in a textile mill, from sweeping to running a carding machine.

We were sitting at Willie's kitchen table, talking. He has a longish, black crew cut, slicked back on top; the white hair around his ears is close-cropped. On his fingers are several simple rings; on both wrists, copper bracelets. That day he was wearing an orange knit turtleneck shirt of the kind that might have been manufactured at the Cone Mills

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plant, two blocks away. Before we started, Willie took a dip of snuff and put it inside his cheek; his eyes watered slightly.

How Willie Rappe got into that back-yard lawn chair is a story that began long before he was born. It is the story of an industry, of government neglect and collusion, of weak and ineffectual unions, and of a disease called brown lung.

More than 650,000 people in the eight Southeastern states work in the textile industry. About a third of them are in North Carolina, where textiles is the state's largest employer. The industry there has been at the center of the South's long, violent history of attempted unionization.

Willie Rappe on Lando, S.C., 1922: "I went to work in Lando . . . doffing, mule spinning at 5 cents an hour, ten hours a day, and I had to sign papers saying that if I got hurt or got killed I didn't get a dime. . . . I lived in one of the mill houses there. . . . I was 12 years old . . . . There was no union in Lando."

Rappe on Danville, Va., 1934: "I was pretty young, but I couldn't tell you how old I were. . . . In Danville, down at Number Six, they had a union there . . . they were going to call a strike there that morning. That mill company had police lined up on that side that morning with all kind of guns—from sawed-off shotguns to machine guns. . . . Well, the people went out, but the people was, you know, they was afraid."

Today the machine guns are gone from the mills, although their concrete emplacements remain as monuments to the theory of labor relations that put them there. Weak and battered, the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA) doggedly continues its struggle, occasionally winning a hard-fought election like the one at the J.P. Stevens mill in Roanoke Rapids, N.C., in August 1974, then losing others at a Cannon plant in Kannapolis, N.C., later that same year and at another Stevens plant in Wallace, N.C., in early 1975. The companies became much more sophisticated in the 1960s and 1970s, substituting wiretaps, innuendos and threats of plant closures for their earlier violent tactics.

Long before there were textile mills or textile workers in the South there was a disease, byssinosis, that has come to be known as brown lung. State and federal officials estimate that up to 15,000 people in North Carolina and more than 100,000 across the country suffer from varying degrees of the disease, which is characterized by wheezing, shortness of breath, dizziness and headaches.

Occupational illness due to dust from vegetable fibers was first described by B. Ramazzini in London in 1705: "Those who hackle in the flax and hemp to prepare it for being spun and wove, afford frequent instances of the unwholesomeness of their trade; for there flies out of this matter a foul mischievous powder, that, entering the lungs by the mouth and throat, causes continued coughs and gradually makes way for asthma. . . . But at the long run if they find their affliction grows upon them they must look out for another trade; for 'tis a sordid profit that's accompanied with the destruction of health."

In the early 1930s the North Carolina General Assembly, noting the growing number of workers who exhibited similar symptoms, passed an occupational health law. According to the then-commissioner of labor, A.L. Fletcher, the law embodied "the best and most progressive provisions of the labor laws and regulations of other states that fit the needs of North Carolina industries."

And so it did. The Labor Department was directed to "conduct research and carry out such studies as will contribute to the health, safety, and well-being of the working people of North Carolina." Mills were ordered to "provide suitable respiratory devices to strain the dust from the air taken into the lungs" and admonished that "adequate fans be provided." There was, however, a peculiarly North Carolina touch to the law, which stated that "immediate compliance" was not required if it "might work a hardship on the employer." The law provided for no penalties.

In 1939, industrial hygienist M.F. Trice, an employee of the North Carolina Industrial Commission, studied the British encounters with cotton dust, which he described as "nearly parallel to the North Carolina experience." Trice's findings, published the following year in *Textile World*, an industry publication, blamed the disease on insufficient cleaning and enclosing of carding machines and inadequate ventilation in mills.

Despite that promising start, the industry's basic response was that the disease did not really exist. What everyone was talking about, industry spokesmen said, was chronic bronchitis and emphysema, aggravated by smoking; or perhaps a nervous affliction. They cited a 1947 finding by the U.S. Public Health Service that "in the United States . . . the problem of serious dust disease among textile workers is hardly known to exist."

Rappe on Greensboro, 1950: "The very first night of work down here in the carding room, the next morning I couldn't have felt worse if I had the flu or the pneumonia, and that's telling you the honest truth. Every evening I come in I'd have to lay down an hour or two, before I could really be myself . . . from the very beginning."

In 1964, Arend Bouhuys, a European doctor specializing in byssinosis, visited the South to conduct a study of his own but could not get into the mills. He was able to study small-scale textile operations in the Atlanta federal penitentiary, where the incidence of brown lung was 30 per cent. Three years later, in 1967, Bouhuys wrote for the *New England Journal of Medicine* an article describing the "respiratory cripples" of Southern mills.

Rappe on Greensboro, 1972: "I can't do much breathing now. I went to one of these doctors that specializes in—what is it?—allergies. He was my Social Security doctor. . . . I asked him about that there. . . . Other people had been telling me it was emphysema. . . . I didn't know what emphysema was."

Since the disease has been proved to exist, the industry has assumed a twofold, fall-back strategy. The first response is that it is not the cotton dust itself that causes brown lung but some element in the cotton dust that reacts in the lungs of workers peculiarly susceptible to it. An "isolate-and-eliminate" approach was developed by Bud Imbus of Burlington Industries and the school of textiles at North Carolina State University, in a study funded by an industry trade organization. It is aimed at "cleaning" the

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dust and prescreening card-room workers.

The second industry response is that if brown lung exists, the burden of protection against it is on the individual worker rather than on the manufacturing process that causes it. From the outset of the debate, the industry position has been that the cost of cleaning up the machinery and the mills would make the manufacture uneconomical. In effect, the mills decided to clean out the workers affected by the cotton dust rather than clean up the dust.

Textile companies did start providing workers with such devices as masks, goggles and respirators. In practice, however, the workers found these devices hot, uncomfortable, ineffective and often unavailable at the mills. When they discarded them or wore them loosely around their necks, supervisors and safety directors took no action.

Rappe on Greensboro, 1950: "They got masks for us . . . they furnished goggles to go over our eyes, and I says, well, I can make more [money] here, and have more money here. . . . I like North Carolina. . . . So I said, well, I'll stick it out."

In 1970 Congress created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) within the U.S. Department of Labor, and gave it the job of inspecting workplaces for hazardous conditions and imposing penalties of up to $10,000 when unsafe and unhealthy conditions were uncovered. Congress also created the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. NIOSH was instructed to study occupational diseases and recommend safe levels of exposure ("standards") to toxic substances. These standards would in turn be enforced by OSHA.

Section 18(b) of the federal OSHA Act allows a state to develop its own OSHA plan and to assume responsibility for enforcing the act—provided the state can enforce it "at least as effectively" as the federal government.

In the matter of cotton dust, which OSHA cited in 1972 as one of its five national "target health hazards," the standard adopted by the federal OSHA during its initial months of activity was one milligram of dust per cubic meter of air, which was a holdover from the standard proposed in 1968 by the American Conference for Governmental Industrial Hygienists. It soon became clear to some medical experts in the field that this standard would not effectively control brown lung disease.

Over the next four years, partly in response to medical findings, NIOSH attempted to come up with and implement a new standard. After much disagreement the figure of one-fifth milligram per cubic meter was reached and recommended to the U.S. Department of Labor. However, the new cotton-dust standard has yet to be accepted by the department.

Recently, in an attempt to force acceptance of the standard, the Textile Workers union filed suit in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. The suit demands an end to what it calls the Department of Labor's "consistent pattern of delay." In addition, Congressional hearings on the proposed standard are scheduled to be held next summer.

The formulation and implementation of cotton-dust standards was viewed by the mills as a direct assault. The industry responded with a bit of classic political manipulation.

During a campaign visit to Charlotte, N.C. in 1972, President Nixon publicly assured industry leaders and workers of the importance he placed on the financial health of the Southern textile industry; he vowed to support import quotas on foreign cloth goods. George Guenther, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, and a former textile industry official, wrote a private memo stating that as part of Nixon's re-election campaign "no highly controversial standards, i.e., cotton dust, will be proposed by OSHA." To avoid any "substantial controversy" Guenther stated, "four more years of properly managed OSHA" would be a great "sales point for fund raising and general support by employers" who were potential donors to the Committee to Re-elect the President. "I do not believe the potential of this appeal is fully realized."

It soon was realized: the textile industry reportedly gave more money to Nixon's 1972 campaign than did any other industry. South Carolina textile magnate Roger Milliken personally delivered more than $250,000 to CREEP on behalf of textile companies.

At the state level, the North Carolina Commissioner of Labor has the ultimate responsibility for enforcing the present one milligram cotton-dust standard. His is an elective office and not surprisingly one of the largest contributors to then-Commissioner Bill Creel's 1972 campaign was Roy Deyton, safety director of Cannon Mills. Addressing a group of businessmen on the effects of the state's enactment of an OSHA law, Commissioner Creel said:

> We have anticipated for several years the passage of something like the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act. Organized labor has been pushing for it, and Ralph Nader and his people got behind it. Perhaps if all states had done as well as we have in industrial safety OSHA would never have come into being. But the law is here and we have to make the best of it. We think we can exercise considerable influence in having the law reasonably administered.

Since that time there has been severe criticism of the state's enforcement of cotton-dust standards. Among the many charges: inspections are few; complaints are not followed up; only the smaller mills are fined, and the legal process averages two years; initially low fines are further reduced or canceled under pressure from state Labor Department officials; only minute cotton particles are measured, and the production of fabrics which combine cotton with polyesters is often exempted from regulations. Some examples of these and other abuses, from the files of the state OSHA in North Carolina:

—February 3, 1975, Royal Cotton Mills of Wake Forest. State inspector finds five times the legal dust level; the company's supply of face masks is exhausted. Judgment: $35 fine and a year to clean up.

—April 15, 1975, Roberta Manufacturing (Cannon Mills) of Concord. State inspector finds 3.5 times the dust level; no masks or respirators. Judgment: "Serious" violation, $650 fine.

At a meeting attended by Roberta officials, Commissioner Creel and the head of North Carolina OSHA (a former safety director for Du Pont) the company complained of "conflicting information," and the penalty was

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reduced from "serious" to "nonserious." A federal OSHA inspector then ruled that the original penalties were "properly assigned." A state follow-up inspection the following June found that workers were not wearing respirators and that the dust had not been sufficiently reduced. The company therefore received a $700 fine for "failure to abate." After another meeting on the subject, Creel and the state OSHA head eliminated the fines.

—April 29, 1975, Robinson Mills (J.P. Stevens) of Dallas. State OSHA inspector finds three times the legal level of cotton dust. No citation issued. A review by federal OSHA finds that the air-suspended dust level had been sufficiently lowered and that "the penalty could be removed."

—May 14, 1975, Rocky Mount Mills of Rocky Mount. State OSHA inspector finds dust levels up to twenty-three times the legal limit and no masks worn by workers. Judgment: Citations rescinded "because there were questions about the sampling procedure" raised by the company to the state Department of Labor.

Over a period of a year and a half only six citations were issued and two penalties assessed for cotton-dust infractions in North Carolina. For several months in late 1973 and early 1974 the state Department of Labor even established an official policy of nonassessment of penalties, regardless of the circumstances. The department quickly reversed itself when federal monitors warned that "serious questions arise as to whether the state is in a position to meet and-or satisfy the 'as effective as' criteria state plans must meet."

For six months, beginning in April 1975, all cotton-dust inspections ceased in North Carolina at the order of Commissioner Creel, who cited alleged confusion in the testing procedures for cotton dust.

Despite Creel's attitude, the addition of federal OSHA responsibility caused some problems at the inspection level. One state inspector told me that "it was like a picnic around here before OSHA came in." With no penalties to assess and minimal enforcement power, there was very little reason to visit most mills in the state. Another longtime inspector complained, "I spent all those years making friends with employers around the state as a safety inspector. Then OSHA came along and I had to do all that enforcing."

Rappe in Greensboro, 1975: "I've got a room here, and my wife's got a room over there. We used to sleep together, when we was both working. But now I'm up and down just about every two hours. Every time I wake up my nerves is all tore up, my head's busting open, I had some kind of crazy dream and I have to get up. Sit there maybe an hour, have a cup of coffee. Sometimes I'm hungry—I have to have something to eat. I have set right here, laid my head over here on this table and slept from three o'clock to quarter to six in the morning."

Until 1971 no North Carolina textile worker had received compensation for brown lung disability. Since then only thirty-eight people have been awarded compensation by the North Carolina Industrial Commission. (The South Carolina commission made no brown lung awards until 1975.) The procedure for filing for and gaining compensation is complex and lengthy, yet it is an improvement over the days when company doctors insisted that the only way to determine the existence of the disease was through autopsy.

Who pays and how much are now the big questions. If the industrial commissions of both North and South Carolina certify the claims of individual brown lung victims, they will be eligible for lump-sum payments (or weekly payments and transfers if they are still on the job) from the companies that insure the mills. Most of those who claim they have brown lung, like Willie Rappe, have hired lawyers.

Rappe in Greensboro, 1975: "If we can get compensation, we deserve it. . . . In all my working in all of these places I could always go back because I always worked to my notice. . . . I helped make clothes to put on my back, on other people's backs, and I got paid for it. I think I give them an honest day's work. But I didn't figure on giving them my health.

"If my wife wasn't working I couldn't make it. Because it takes all I make for medicine and doctors. . . . Medicine is going up, doctors are going up [but] we got to pay that same price."

The Carolinas Brown Lung Association (CBLA) was organized in April 1975 and now claims 300 members in three cities in North and South Carolina. The members, almost all of whom are now retired, have held half a dozen demonstrations in Raleigh and Columbia calling for adequate compensation for brown lung victims and more and stiffer OSHA inspections of textile mills. They have also testified in support of warning signs to be posted in carding rooms where the cotton dust exceeds the OSHA standard. (Jack Wellman, president of the South Carolina Textile Manufacturers' Association, opposes the signs: they "would scare hell out of the workers.")

North Carolina Commissioner Creel died last fall. His successor, Republican T. Avery Nye, conferred with critics of the state's role in brown lung and subsequently fired or transferred five OSHA officials. At a news conference in mid-January, however, Nye made clear that his willingness to confront the textile industry has definite limits. He declared that his office "will not yield to calls for a police-state atmosphere in OSHA enforcement. . . ."

Among Greensboro's most active participants in the brown lung struggle is Willie Rappe. He has twice traveled to Raleigh to join demonstrations and meet with state officials. (One sign at a Raleigh demonstration read: "Blue jeans for you, and brown lung for us.")

The tape recorder was turned off and we began to pack up. Willie went to a kitchen drawer and returned with a photograph of a thin, middle-aged man—much like himself—standing next to a cotton carding machine.

"That's my youngest brother. He died of a heart attack on account of that dust." His voice trailed off for a moment.

"We know we got it. We know there's no cure for it. We got to live with it. It used to worry us, but we stopped worrying and left it up to the Lord. But our main goal is for the young ones as is still in the mills not to come out in the condition we are."

His left hand covered his eyes, knuckles deep in one socket. He was crying. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Borges—Literature and Politics North and South

GENE H. BELL

I

Surveying the sum total of Borges's works, one is struck by a kind of "bulge" at approximately the middle of his career. This bulge constitutes the relatively brief spell—1939 to the middle 1950s—during which the Argentine writer produced the stories gathered in *Ficciones* and *El Aleph*, as well as the prose parables in *Dreamtigers*. Until then, Borges had published many of his strangely provocative essays and some lovely books of verse—but little as yet of universal import. Years later, during the 1960s and 1970s, well after his writing career had reached its peak, he reaped the benefits of his sudden and deserved fame, living the life of a much-esteemed public figure, journeying from podium to podium, prize to prize—and meanwhile issuing the anti-climactic narratives of *Doctor Brodie's Report* or playful trifles like *The Book of Imaginary Beings*. What is noteworthy about those luminous fifteen years—the *Ficciones* and *El Aleph* years—is that they closely coincide with a biographical and historical moment, a specific period of acute, seemingly endless crises in Borges's life as well as in the larger world itself.

In 1937, at the age of 38, Borges started work as a cataloguer in a dreary suburban library. Borges somehow spent nine years in that shabby place, earning very little, doing pointless tasks amid what seems to have been an unpleasant crew of Philistines. It was Borges's first regular job, and his only extended encounter with the coarse world of non-literature. But his troubles had only begun. In February 1938, Borges's father died. In December, Borges himself was injured in a fall from a stairway and nearly died of blood poisoning. Upon recovering, Borges began writing his greatest works—though, ironically, these went largely unrecognized for more than a decade, the annual prizes regularly going to authors far below his level. Borges has never forgiven or forgotten this last fact.

Beyond these personal troubles there was the growing socio-political nightmare. From 1930 onward, the Fascist wave abroad—in itself distressing for a Borges sympathetic to liberal Europe—had set in motion a number of local equivalents. In contrast to the rest of Spanish America, which was passively in favor of the Allies, an idiosyncratic political militarism was to arise in Argentina. Perhaps less pro-German than it was anti-English, it was in some degree swept to power by widespread anti-imperialist (i.e., anti-British) sentiment, culminating finally in the right-wing military populism of Perón. For though the political outlook of the *peronista* and other officers' sects of the time was more or less corporative-nationalist rather than left-wing socialist, they drew a significant amount of support by their opposition to British capitalism—a key issue in a country long dominated by English finance.

As was inevitable under a right-wing nationalist regime, those mildly liberal, pro-English (the labels roughly overlap) sectors of Argentine society were subjected to cultural isolation and political harassment. The Borges family had ties with precisely this grouping. (Borges's grandmother was English; his grandfather had fought on the liberal side in the 19th-century civil wars; and his father had taught in a British school.) At the outset of Perón's Presidency, Borges was dismissed from his library post. A clerk at City Hall explained to him, "Well, you were on the Allies' side, what do you expect?" The government later had Borges shadowed by the police; on various occasions, Borges's mother, sister, and nephew were actually put in prison.

Borges understandably looks back on these fifteen years as his worst. The events must have seemed shocking to a 38-year-old man of letters, one whose pleasantly *aisé* existence hitherto had seldom been ruffled by cares other than literary. Then came boring work and unpleasant company, bereavement and near-death, forced cultural isolation, political persecution. The piling up of disagreeable experiences no doubt appeared to him irrational, beyond comprehension.

Such were the circumstances under which Borges brought out his greatest stories. From his vantage point of chaos—his altered family situation, a miserable job, and an anti-Liberal dictatorship—creating the stories served him as his concrete means of organized defense. The act of writing the *Ficciones* and *El Aleph* is thus a classic instance of literature thriving in an adversary role, nourished by a struggle against untoward personal and political conditions. The subjective attitude of Borges the man is of course a complex matter, but in its literary version there are two noteworthy components: a nostalgia for combat in the past, and a learned and urbane liberalism vis-à-vis the present. It is highly significant that Borges's best knife stories, with 19th-century heroism as their subjects, were written at the height of the military-populist dictatorship in Argentina. In such a context the stories assume a character of subtle protest, of opposition through counter-example: the true courage of the days of Republican Argentina (a time when the Borges family, and its values, were at their peak of class dominance) stands in implicit contrast to the shabby, dictatorial 1940s (when the economically ruined Borges family, together with their social allies, were politically deprived).

Far better known is the opposition stance exemplified by Borges in his richest, most celebrated tales of fantasy. In "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" the narrator looks back on the lure, during the 1930s, of such false and facile "symmetries"—as in his words—"dialectical materialism, anti-Semitism, Nazism," all of which have culminated in the reigning hysteria over the planet Tlön. Impervious to, but alone amid these omnipresent Idealisms, the narrator finds silent refuge in Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial*, an evocatively nostalgic work on classical archaeology. (The easy juxtaposition of Nazism with Marxism may suggest the extent of Borges's acquaintance with the latter.)

This essentially is the apology of the civilized man of letters, the cultivated gentleman who, in a time of social upheaval, can side neither with the rebels nor with the reactionaries; experientially removed from the arena of social battles, lacking even the political information available in books, he dismisses Left and Right as equally false, unaware of how untenable his position is, though perfectly well aware of his irrelevance, in a crumbling social pano-

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rama. Ironically, Borges's fanciful view of the Hitler decade is itself an Idealist intellectual's interpretation. It sees the political turmoil as being brought about not by economic dislocations but by the mass appeal of a few seductive ideas—recalling those old-fashioned historians who felt that the French Revolution was "caused" by the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire. For all of Borges's artfulness and sophistication, the dizzying final paragraphs of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" ultimately reflect the bewildered middle-way position of 1930s moderates, who, while fearful of the Axis, for ideological reasons were unwilling to make common cause with the anti-Fascist Left, tending instead to brush off both sides and label them fanatics.

Much the same spirit informs the last few pages of "The Library at Babel." There the narrator-librarian surveys a universe beset by ignorance, violence and plague, by ideological splintering and a tired sense that all has been said —much as Europe and Argentina must have appeared to Borges in 1941. The narrator, in need of reassurance, finds consolation in the fact of the Library itself, its untapped riches, its order, its grandeur. The story, unlike "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," avoids any explicit social or political judgments, focusing instead on an epistemological question. Rather than attack the Right and the Left as equally and hopelessly Utopian, it depicts the scientific search for knowledge as futile and pointless. Though certain fundamental truths about the Library-Universe are occasionally hit upon—such as the decisive discovery that twenty-five letters form the basic components of all the books—these only whet people's appetite, giving rise to feverish quests for more knowledge, about one's self and about the cosmos, finally generating social division and personal despair. The truth seekers, unfortunately, cannot grasp what the narrator knows: that the Universe is "infinite," "useless" and "secret." The note on which the story ends is thus intellectual quietism rather than explicit social conservatism. But then, since in this story the Library is the world, to cease seeking to uncover its laws does correspond to social withdrawal.

This is the muted agony of an essentially traditionalist intellectual, a nostalgic man of letters whose world has become opaque, incomprehensible, and whose readings in the cultural heritage of a happier, more stable past furnish him no concrete hold on the present, when things crumble; he then projects his own historical bewilderment onto others. Borges's philosophical nihilism by no means enjoys universal acceptance, however. Views such as these can scarcely characterize a practicing politician or a research scientist. And the fact is that Borges, his celebrated erudition notwithstanding, is scarcely informed about natural science—its mode of knowing, its praxis—while his sense of 20th-century social thought is particularly limited. Even Freud's discoveries Borges has shrugged off as the ravings of "a kind of madman," and in a 1945 essay Borges actually puts Freud in the same camp with the Nazis and assorted modern barbarians. In his nonliterary readings, Borges amuses himself with mystics, rather likes Jung and dabbles in Schopenhauer—speculative thinkers who spun highly provocative fancies and conceits, but whose contributions in the way of significant knowledge are in the end minimal.

These and other darkly brooding tales, written during a time of personal torment for Borges, of political struggles in Europe and Argentina, demonstrably exist due to the prompting of these larger crises. The proof of this is that when Borges finally emerged from his woes in 1955, his work began losing its textural and philosophic richness. By the same token, little of Borges's output before 1938 suggests the future writer of fiction of worldwide and revolutionary impact. It is probable that, had Borges not been compelled to undergo these unsettling experiences, he would have remained what he had been until his middle 30s: a good and fairly interesting poet, erudite and skilled, a talented literary gentleman much like others of his kind, those numerous upper-class Latin American men of letters who write a certain amount of excellent verse and seldom attain major stature. (Although there are critics who try to make a case for Borges as the poetic equal of Neruda or Paz, that is wishful thinking. Borges's poetry is nostalgically neat but narrow, intellectually fanciful but slightly prosy, touchingly warm but lacking in larger passions.) Similarly, the earlier essays, though filled with fresh insights and conceits, are still the work of an eccentric genius who has not yet hit upon his most fitting medium and subject matter.

Borges's sudden leap into literary greatness around 1940, then, appears to have been catalyzed by a freak situation, the unique congruence of his personal crisis with an unusual historical moment —that of the period of the 1930s and 1940s, when the liberal, Anglophile upper class in Argentina was under siege by a mass movement of the Right —much as were the liberal anti-Fascist forces in Europe. When, with the anti-Perón coup of 1955, the struggle against the populist Right came to an end, the notorious spiritual sterility of the old upper-class milieu reasserted itself. Since then, it has reverted, in its socio-political preoccupations, to orthodox anti-communism, an ideology well-known for the vacuity of its intellectual products. Borges himself has shared in the political crudities of that social nucleus, even to the point of signing petitions favoring the Bay of Pigs invaders, pleading for the execution of Régis Debray in Bolivia, dedicating a book to Richard Nixon and quietly supporting the Onganía dictatorship in the 1960s.

Whatever the limitations of his early and late phases, Borges's innovations in the Spanish language and in prose fiction give rise to a Latin American literary movement that is still in force. He is the prime mover in that impressive series of novels which includes Cortázar's *Hopscotch*, García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Cabrera Infante's *Three Trapped Tigers*. As Carlos Fuentes remarked, without Borges the modern Latin American novel simply would not exist. Nonetheless, at the same time that Borges's work initiates a new literary period, it also signals a culmination, perhaps an ending to an earlier, lengthier social and cultural era, that of the domination of Latin America by its Europhile, moderately liberal upper classes. It is one of those ironies of history that this social milieu—so often legitimately criticized, so remote from basic human concerns, from those larger struggles which can nourish great art—accidentally found itself during the 1930s and 1940s in a position of active opposition to the national and international Right, and holding the view that the latter is the greatest threat to civilization. It was the first time since the days of the Rosas dictatorship that Argentina's pro-English liberals had been politically victimized and thereby drawn into the broad arena of their nation's conflicts. And, as in the Rosas days, the so-called "Second Dictatorship" gave rise to a formidable, impressive literature on the part of the opposition. Borges's best stories, which exalt the old Europe of humane letters, and evoke a lost, courageous 19th-century Argentina in which knives figure in place of guns, are the greatest literary works to emerge from the historical myths and longings of Argentina's old upper class.

Significantly, the novelists that have followed in Borges's wake have for the most part no personal links with his preferred social arrangements, their values and practices. Products of the urban middle class rather than the rural

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old-rich, they have depended not on family money or aristocratic patronage but on full-time work in such fields as teaching, translating, clerking, journalism and diplomacy. Their literary sources and subjects also differ substantially from those familiar Borgesian themes—on the one hand gaucho wistfulness, on the other Western culture under siege by the barbarians, by raiders of libraries, by vandals under the spell of Nazism, Marxism, Freudism, Peronism, Tlönism. . . . Julio Cortázar, for example, draws freely on French thought and surrealism, on anthropology and jazz. In another vein, Manuel Puig, Cabrera Infante and the younger Mexicans have found a locus of their own in films and Pop culture, while García Márquez, Fuentes and Vargas Llosa are varyingly influenced by Faulkner, Spanish American regionalism and Marx. Borges's urbane, erudite concern for minor Edwardians and the glories of Western civilization must appear quaint and irrelevant to these novelists—however much they admire his literary achievement.

II

The impact of Borges on American writing may be almost as great as was his earlier influence in Latin America. The American 1950s were a desert, a bleak stretch relieved only by one or two entertainments by Nabokov; for barrenness few literary epochs can match the cold-war years. The quiet arrival of Borges's Englished fictions was to make a difference for the 1960s; his dreamlike artifices helped to stimulate a writing culture steeped in WASP-suburban metaphysics and Jewish neo-realism. The Argentine master reawakened for us the possibilities of far-fetched fancy, of formal exploration, of parody, intellectuality and wit. There are fantasies by Coover and Barthelme scarcely conceivable without the originating presence of Borges; allusions to the latter appear in Pynchon; and the longer novels of Barth are shaped in great degree by a theory of parody derived from Borges.

Still, Borges's fame in the United States shows nuances of difference from his reputation in Latin America. For one thing, his standing in our country is much higher, both in relative and absolute terms. Curiously enough, no other Latin American author of fiction has caught on with comparable force, even though the Spanish-speaking continent now boasts numerous novelists as eminent in their respective fields as Borges once was in his. Most North American literary types at least know of Borges, while relatively few have heard of Cortázar, García Márquez, Carpentier, Fuentes, Vargas Llosa. It is an added irony, moreover, that the peak of the Borges cult on the American campus came at a time—the late 1960s and early 1970s—when the younger authors of the Hispanic world had for more than a decade simply assumed the existence of Borges and gone beyond him—indeed, when Borges's work had become less of a revolution, an innovation, a surprise, and had assumed its rightful place in the Latin American literary landscape.

There are identifiable reasons for the somewhat lopsided quality of Borges's American fame, some purely circumstantial, others profoundly historical, "political." Among the former reasons one must note Borges's simple physical presence in those 1960s, crowded years when he delivered literally hundreds of lectures across the land, and in fine English, with a fluency equaled by few Latin American authors, whose second language is more often French. It is a reasonable guess that most of Borges's serious United States readers have actually heard him speak on some occasion—a wish not to be realized by, say, Cortázar or Beckett devotees. Similarly, Borges's willingness to talk with all manner of interviewers has given him further visibility, planting his name in national weeklies and newspapers as well as in drugstore paperbacks and "little" magazines. All this could not help but stimulate interest; it gave Borges enthusiasts some sense of having real ties with him, of knowing him more than as an authorial abstraction, while people who had not read Borges found their curiosity aroused by these reminders of his existence. Probably no other non-English-language author of recent times has been so much in the American limelight. Finally, Borges's childlike pro-Americanism—surpassed only of late by Solzhenitsyn's—inevitably flattered his audiences, enhanced his acceptability with Americans who would be easily discomfited by the anti-imperialism of a García Márquez or a Carpentier.

But there are social facts and institutional forces which contribute just as significantly to Borges's influence in America. Among these is the vastness of the North American academic subculture—more colleges and universities than there are in all of Europe, let alone in Latin America. Many of these schools were quite rich during the 1960s, and could pay Borges well for the myriad seminars and lectures (so many talks, in fact, that he inevitably repeated himself). Even more important, here was a bookish author with a great deal of obscure erudition, an Argentinian Eliot-Pound-Joyce whom several hundred Spanish professors could carefully explicate in their classes and weave about him a network of

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articles in two or three dozen special-interest journals—articles which were read by thousands of graduate students, who then wrote papers derived from those articles and set their sights on being future authors of articles on Borges. The nature of this Argentine author's *oeuvre* is such that it generated a new professional specialty and came to play a well-established part in the American publishing machine, like Chaucer anthologies or Chinese cookbooks. And although general interest in Borges has subsided somewhat, the managers of the Borges market continue to produce reviews and *Festschriften*, holding seminars and symposia in which Borges's work is dealt with as a self-contained entity, to be considered in a vacuum, ahistorically, as if the two books he wrote thirty years ago were still a prime issue in Latin American writing.

Aside from the decisive boost given Borges by academia, however, there is the deeper role of the stories themselves, the uses to which their meanings lend themselves. For, while the stylistic and formal manner of Borges gave the literary professionals a task to perform, on the other hand the content of *Ficciones* supplied his readers with a precise political optics, a cluster of historical attitudes, a mode of social feeling that helped strengthen and define their ideological posture. During the 1960s the United States was torn by social conflict: riots in the ghetto, a hopeless war in Asia and the campus revolts ultimately created by that war. In this disorderly picture (comparable to that of Europe in the 1930s or Argentina in the 1940s) Borges's artifices provided a defense for those American academics who were as confused by the whole spectacle as our informant on Tlön or the librarian at Babel are bewildered by the sinister forces they evoke. Departmental chairmen, professors pushing the New Criticism, apolitical novelists like John Updike all shared a vague, inarticulate opposition to the war in Indochina, combined with an inability to sympathize with the highly vocal anti-war Left. They found in Borges's nightmares a sophisticated, inspired, vividly argued affirmation of their own position—i.e., an urbane aloofness, a middle-way quietism, a studied, even-handed, occasionally snobbish indifference to Right and Left, and in this case to the physical slaughter of the war and to the moral anger of the opposition activists. The literary people, in their alienation from, and ignorance of, the political situation, carved out for themselves—as do Borges's raconteurs—a refuge in seminars and old books, in the monumental libraries of the American university system. For, just as at the end of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" the narrator shuts his eyes to politics and hides in his Quevedian translation of Sir Thomas Browne, in like manner some professors of the 1960s took their stand in the past, in the great traditions of the West, that accumulated store of rich and complex culture which, during those years, irate radicals and blacks on the one hand, and weekly body counts and B-52 strikes on the other, seemed to have rendered marginal, useless, "irrelevant."

That our literary milieus found in Borges's fiction not only a peculiar artistic greatness but a useful social content as well, becomes clearer when one considers the comparatively small following thus gained in the United States by other Latin Americans. The fact is that, though García Márquez, Cortázar or Carpentier are comparable major artists—whose novels are read throughout the Spanish-speaking world, well received by North American reviewers, and intensely examined by professional Hispanists (who often as not miss the social meaning of their books)—they have not generated the cult, let alone the academic market, enjoyed here by Borges.

Part of the explanation for this must lie in the unsettling tone and content of these authors' works. The atmosphere of threat in Borges's tales comes off as bookish and abstract when contrasted, say, with the more concretely physical horrors in the stories of Julio Cortázar. The latter's *Hopscotch* puts into question the very value of European thought and learning; and his Dadaistic *Cronopios*—a commercial failure here—tweaks the nose of bourgeois respectability by disrupting routine. Alejo Carpentier's close affiliation with the Castro government could hardly promote his standing in the United States. His best-known novel, *The Lost Steps*, is built on a suggestion that "Europe," with all her rich culture, may be far more barbaric than the Indians of Venezuela—a notion contemplated by but a fringe of educated Americans; and *Explosion in a Cathedral* pins down the various ideological nuances and posturings brought into being by revolution—an experience too remote for most American liberals who, with their relatively conflict-free history, tend toward political consensus and compromise.

Similarly, García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, one of the great novels of our time, has failed to arouse any literary excitement comparable to that inspired by the works of Borges. Again, however, the politics—anti-Americanism, pro-revolutionism—embedded within the texture of that book

IN A BAMBOO HOUSE

A blue sky.
A green sky.
Here I lie seeing the world
through gold squares.
The heavy air pushes at the bottleflies
who travel here,
blue and green.
This house is like a cage or a womb,
its woven roof bending gold above me,
full of holes.
When it rains, it rains in here.
Meanwhile beautiful flies, parrots, monkeys
and sunshine.

The weaving makes me dream.
I am alone in a rich and quiet town.
It is an afternoon of evergreens and slow cars.
A child stands on an overpass
watching the white streets,
her black hair blown over her face.
Like me, she longs for death.

There is no end to this turning,
to pianos heard in the morning
and owls at night.
No end to the flies, to the trees,
to damp and murdering love,
to the sky, to the endless afternoons.

Jane Hayman

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probably puts off and excludes a fair number of American readers. Moreover, García Márquez's humane, understanding portraits of his characters, so unlike the "literary" aura surrounding Borges's gauchos and hoods, probably meets with a certain amount of cultural incomprehension, even condescension, on the part of readers whose attitudes of superiority have everything to do with the generally low status of Latin American immigrants in this country. Finally, the novels of Fuentes and Vargas Llosa, steeped as they are in Marxist concepts, must inevitably fall on deaf ears with an American public largely hostile or indifferent to or ignorant of the cluster of issues raised by that strand of thought.

None of this diminishes Borges's stature as a literary artist. There were aspects both modish and ideological to his American fame in the 1960s but the intrinsic worth of his contribution is now accepted. His stories, moreover, have a special significance in that they clear the way for numerous literary trends on both American continents, determining the shape of much fiction to come. In his part of the world, Borges's meticulous use of language—his careful construction of each sentence, his strict avoidance of Hispanic bombast, his cool understatement—has revolutionized Spanish prose; he thus stands in the same relation to current Latin novelists as Flaubert once did to numerous authors in Europe. At the same time, by rejecting realism and naturalism, he has opened up to our Northern writers a virgin field, led them to a wealth of new subjects and procedures—in a word, provided an alternative to Updike and Bellow. In successfully transcending the old modes of representation and discourse, Borges has accidentally done for us a job previously performed elsewhere by Poe, the fantast from a "barbarous," backward land who, by way of Baudelaire, freed French verse from its classic and romantic dead weights.

The art of every author has also its social origins and functions, however, and Borges's stories, as we have seen, emerged in their time from the anti-fascism *cum* anti-communism of Argentina's liberal Anglophile upper class. Later, this outlook, masterfully given shape in Borges's best books, furnished artistic fuel for the supine anti-war and hostile anti-Left politics of our 1960s literati. Hence, besides being a catalyst, a Poe to our new writers, Borges took on a conserving function, one allotted earlier to Camus, who deemed life absurd, history a nightmare, and action meaningless, preaching as man's sole path to salvation an indulgent metaphysics of subjectivity. The 1960s were too angry, too rough to be soothed by so callow a pessimism; Borges furnished a more concrete and objective stance, one built on more than personal feeling. To what he and others perceived as a mindless Left, and knowledge and history without hope or meaning, Borges gallantly counterpoised a consolation through books, through the verbal treasures of the past.

The 1970s are a rather different matter, what with universities in the doldrums, enthusiasm for "pure" learning on the wane, students shying away from literature, and a widespread skepticism about personal salvation through art. There is no war, no strife, but the *status quo*, less persuasive than it was some years ago, needs a more fitting advocate to prop up its image. After being badly bruised in Asia, the non-Left American reader wants a less sophisticated, less urbane, less witty anti-communism, one that doesn't cloud things up with mental fancies or old books, wastes no time on right-wing threats as well; the system now needs a sterner, more openly "political" conservatism that will drown out the din of American violence abroad and proffer arguments against the political disillusionment back home. That function seems, for now, to have been assigned to Solzhenitsyn. □

The Other United States

ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG MAN. *By John Reed. City Lights Books. 144 pp. $3.*

DAVID H. ROSENTHAL

John Reed is part of an American tradition of radical journalism and literature, a tradition that has rarely been taken seriously or treated as a whole. Some of its leading figures, such as Kenneth Fearing or Jack London, hardly even enter the consciousness of the average student of literature. Others, like Richard Wright or Walt Whitman, are studied in isolation from that tradition. Like our country's past itself, like the IWW which gave Reed his first taste of political struggle, a large part of our national literature has been censored, ignored and distorted out of fear that we might come to know ourselves.

John Reed wrote the stories in *Adventures of a Young Man* between 1912 and 1917. They weren't collected, however, until 1963 (by Seven Seas Press in Berlin), and only now have they finally been published in the United States. The stories reveal a John Reed different from, and in some ways deeper than, the ardent journalist who wrote *Ten Days That Shook the World* and who founded the Communist Labor Party. Here Reed is more self-exposing, especially when he writes about his own turf, the United States. He is intensely alive to the excitement and possibilities of this country, and their expression in human beings, whom he paints in rich, Whitmanesque prose.

David Rosenthal is a poet and teacher living in New York City. His collection of poems, Eyes on the Street, *was recently issued by Barlenmir House.*

> She was robust and young, eager, red and black to look at. No one could dance like her, in the restaurant we went to. Everyone turned to watch her—the blank-faced, insolent waiters, the flat-chested men biting cigars, the gay and discontented women who sat there as if it had all been created to set them off. In her black straw hat with the blue feather, her slightly shabby brown tweed suit, she blew into the soft warmth, gold, mirrors,

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hysterical ragtime of the place like a lawless wind.

But more often than lawless winds—a marvelous image of this chaotic, volatile land—we find suffering in Reed's stories, a series of painful glimpses beneath America's flashy façade. Most of his pieces are about our lower depths: whores and bums, the unemployed and underpaid, soldiers of fortune in Mexico, cops on the beat on 14th Street. Reed sees them with compassion and with a hungry curiosity to penetrate their lives. In his own time he was sometimes accused of literary slumming, and his acknowledgment of the charge is part of his openness in this book. As a bum tells the hero who's just bought him a meal: "You just had to save someone tonight. I understand. I got an appetite like that, too. Only mine's women."

Reed did have an appetite for saving people. Perhaps it is opening up a psychological abyss to raise the point, but his commitment to social change kept him from being just a voyeur. It also helped him overcome what he felt to be the handicap of his protected upbringing. *Adventures of a Young Man* is really his journey of discovery through his own nation, a vivid report on his emergence from the chrysalis of prep school and college into the steamy reality of American life.

The second half of *Adventures of a Young Man* also includes some snatches of reporting on the Mexican Civil War, on World War I, and on the Russian Revolution. It ends with "Almost Thirty," a kind of personal stocktaking Reed wrote shortly before his death. This is the longest, and perhaps the most satisfying and intimate piece in the book. Here Reed describes his childhood, his fistfights and experiences with neighborhood gangs in Portland, his initial loneliness and developing political awareness at Harvard, and his thoughts about the future.

> I cannot give up the idea that out of democracy will be born the new world—richer, braver, freer, more beautiful. As for me, I don't know what I can do to help—I don't know yet.

Reed didn't live to find out what he could have done, either politically or as a writer. He died in 1922, at the age of 33. What he left us, in this small book, is more the beginning than the fulfillment of a literary career. Yet in spite of its slightness and occasional sentimentality, *Adventures of a Young Man* stands, along wtih *Ten Days That Shook the World*, as a solid achievement in our literature. As for the new world he hoped to see born, we're still waiting—willing, but as yet unemployed midwives. □

The Missing Voice on Cuba

THE NEW CUBA: Paradoxes and Potentials. *Edited by Ronald Radosh. William Morrow & Co. 248 pp. $8.95.*

GEORGE WOODCOCK

The first thing that seemed strange to me about Ronald Radosh's anthology, *The New Cuba: Paradoxes and Potentials*, was that it contained no reference to the relationship between Cuba and Canada. The greater part of the book—quite understandably—was concerned with the changing viewpoint of American radicals faced by the phenomenon of a purportedly revolutionary socialist state within missile distance of their own cities. But it did contain one major essay by the maverick German radical, Hans Magnus Enzensberger; it referred often to the brief summer of accord between the Cubans and such West European intellectuals as Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir; it also discussed relationships between Cuba and other Latin American countries, most of which until comparatively recently adhered to the OAS ban on diplomatic recognition. But never, at any point, was a reference made to the fact that at least one *norte-americano* country—whatever the current political trend of its government—consistently refused to join the Washington-dominated continental boycott of Cuba, and maintained unbroken trade and diplomatic relations with Havana from Batista's overthrow down to the present. That country was Canada.

I raise this question of Canadian-Cuban relations not to make the customary complaint of a general tendency among American radicals and conservatives alike to be blind to anything happening north of the 49th Parallel. What I do feel is important to point out is that in omitting the Canadian viewpoint from this otherwise excellent collection of independent opinions on Cuba, Ronald Radosh may well have missed one of the keys to his problem, which appears to be less the discovery of what has actually happened in Cuba than the discovery of how the Cuban experiment has affected other communities in the hemisphere.

"Cuba became a replacement for one's shattered hopes about America," says Radosh in one of the many wise remarks that occur in his own essay, "The Cuban Revolution and Western Intellectuals." Cuba also, one must add, became for American conservatives an alarmingly close reminder—visible almost from their front windows if they lived in southern Florida—of forces moving against the continental hegemony whose perpetuation they regarded as necessary for the survival of the United States. When, in the Bay of Pigs episode at one end of a decade and Watergate at the other, the Cuban question seemed also to stimulate all that was worst in American political life, it was understandable that Castro should assume in American eyes a peculiarly epiphanic nature, angelic or diabolical according to one's viewpoint. This fact alone—that Cuba attracts the extremes of political fanaticism—makes all the more creditable Radosh's effort to seek the most objective radical accounts he can find, and to try to make them the basis for an adequate portrait of the Cuban Revolution. Yet one continues to wonder why—when he went out of his way to print Enzensberger's clear-sighted study of the early history of Cuban communism and Frances FitzGerald's remarkable *New Yorker* piece, "A Reporter at Large: Slightly Exaggerated Enthusiasms" (with its shattering aside: "the shock of Cuba for me was the feeling of normality and familiarity beneath the official surface"), he did not go north of the border to explore the special Canadian viewpoint.

For in Canada he would have found (*a*) a vast majority of people in a political spectrum ranging from Diefenbaker Conservatives to local Maoists who believed that Cuba was not threat enough to sever relationships, (*b*) a people without the sense of guilt over imperialism that would make them seek a fulfillment of their ideals in a once imperially exploited country and (*c*)—perhaps most significant of all—a socialism in a thriving condition (until recently dominating three out of ten provincial governments) whose chances were not ruined in the 1920s and 1930s, as the chances of American socialism were, by what Radosh calls "the equation of socialism with Soviet society." Canadian socialism found its double roots in Western agrarian populism and the British Labour tradition and is strongly enough naturalized for socialist

George Woodcock's latest book is Who Killed the British Empire? (*Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co.*).

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methods to be used often even by non-socialist governments (e.g., the takeover of B.C. Electric by a Social Credit government). Hence, because socialism is rather everyday, familiar and piecemeal in Canada, it is viewed more calmly than in many other countries, and Cuba —as a socialist country—has been seen there with much more objectivity and understanding than in the United States or in most of the Latin American countries, where Castroism has often been equated with the kind of internal revolutionary threat that hardly exists in Canada. Except for a few extreme left-wing socialists (many American by origin) Canadians have tended to look on Cuba with a cautious, unfanatical but also unhostile eye.

What they have seen has perhaps not been dramatically different from the composite view presented by *The New Cuba: Paradoxes and Potentials*, but I believe it perhaps makes fewer allowances because it is weighed down by fewer guilts, though it is often complicated, among fairly representative Canadian radical patriots like myself, by a certain gratitude that Cuba may have fought part of our own battle against the centripetal continentalism propagated by Washington. I could write at greater length about the reservations which I feel toward *The New Cuba* and what I believe are the flaws in its objectivity, but perhaps I had better concentrate on two points that seem to me quite crucial.

The first is that while Cuba's role as a quasi-socialist nation in comparison with Eastern European and Asian analogues has been abundantly considered, as well as its position in the contemporary Third World, little attention has been paid to its position in an older tradition of Latin American insurrection, the tradition of the *pronunciamiento* with its military *caudillos*. Yet Castro came to power on the wave of a traditional, unideologically motivated Latin American insurrectionary movement, of which he was the traditional *caudillo*, and since that time he has remained the military *jefe máximo* of a country whose councils have been dominated by army and police officers and in which, despite loud declarations of Marxism-Leninism, the *caudillo*'s personal entourage rather than the weak Communist Party, with its varying fortunes, has remained the enduring custodian of power. In recent years the massive acceptance of Soviet aid and the conditions that accompany it have brought changes, with the Communist Party appearing to move into a position of greater influence, but a rapprochement with the United States could easily shift the balance of real power back to Castro's personal junta. The tortuous path and sad end of the Mexican Revolution, which nobody in the enthusiastic years of the 1920s ever anticipated, should not be forgotten when one considers Cuba. Cárdenas was perhaps, for his time, a more conscious revolutionary than Castro, whose conversion to Marxism was entirely expedient. Today, when Cuba may be on the verge of the next policy swing, may indeed be the appropriate time to consider its revolution in terms of an older Latin American rather than a newer Third World tradition.

The other point that occurs insistently to me—and perhaps it is not so much another point as at first it appears—is that even the radicals who are aware of the completely anti-libertarian character of Cuban post-revolutionary society, are still inclined to find justification, or at least consolation, in the fact that the material conditions of the mass of the population have indeed improved. Nobody starves; there are housing and medical services for all; inequalities in income have been remarkably narrowed except perhaps for a tiny minority on the highest level, about whose way of living remarkably little is revealed. Consolation can indeed be gained here. Under Batista the people lived, unfree, in material squalor; now they live, unfree, in a frugal material sufficiency. It is a material improvement. No more. And can we take such evidence beyond consolation into the realm of justification? Surely not. Most dictators, if they hope to last, provide material rewards. Hitler abolished unemployment and raised the standard of living; Mrs. Gandhi appears to have given, in exchange for a massive loss of liberties, some material concessions; even Franco presided over a genuine and general upward shift in living standards during the decades between his victory and his death. Better living standards are elementary magic for totalitarian rulers. The real magic is to transform authoritarian into libertarian socialism, to turn revolutions into what an anarchist character in Malraux's *L'Espoir* called "the holidays of life." That, up to the present, the rulers of Cuba have shown no signs of achieving or, indeed, of wishing to achieve. Castro's approval of the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia may not have been a merely pragmatic gesture intended to gain Soviet support (though that in itself would be appalling enough); it may have been—and everything in his actions since victory seems to bear out the assumption—an act completely consistent with his role as a dictator in the Latin American tradition, *jefe máximo* modern style. □

Gifts of the Thirteenth Fairy

ABOUT THE SLEEPING BEAUTY. *By P.L. Travers. Illustrated by Charles Keeping. McGraw-Hill Book Co. 128 pp. $7.95.*

JERRY GRISWOLD

P.L. Travers, the author of *Mary Poppins*, has turned again to the figure of the wise woman in *About the Sleeping Beauty*. Like the myth of Persephone to which it can be linked, the story of the Sleeping Beauty is about spring and all that follows after the dormancy of winter, when the sun begins to ascend and all creatures and events are brought to fruition. Travers offers six versions of the tale (including her own) and each is a little different, each adjusts its particular message to what the Sufis call *Zaman, Makhan, Ikhwan* (the time, the place, and the people).

Travers's version is set in Gurdjieffian opulence and cast in terms of sultans, seneschals and suites. This tale of ascendancy begins with the long-wished-for birth of the Princess Rose, rises to the great day when the twelve fairies bless her and reaches a hiatus when the curse of the Thirteenth Fairy leads Rose to the spindle and the whole castle to The Deep Sleep. The tale rallies once more when the Prince joins it, finds his way to the Sufic center (*qutub*) of the castle, kisses the Princess and breaks the spell, and finally makes a husband for the Princess beyond her family's highest hopes. The peripeties of the tale are so happy—and Travers's treatment so fecund—that when spindles are condemned in the kingdom the weavers become even more prosperous as merchants. What is perhaps most interesting in this expansive version is that Travers has not adopted the narrative style of the fairy tale ethnologists of the 19th century who reduced oral forms to their literary equivalents. Travers's voice is

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that of the storyteller: she plays with the story, jokes and makes musing asides, introduces linguistic flourishes ("taradiddles") and swells character portrayals.

What makes Travers's version different from the Grimms' *"Dornröschen,"* which she includes here, is her emphasis on the Sleeping Beauty that men come to think of as "a secret within themselves." In the Grimm version the emphasis falls equally, if not more, on the Prince whose spirit brings the Princess and the kingdom out from beneath the spell. He is the hero who steps in as the curse of the hundred years wanes and who is carried along with the momentum of the world waxing again, as it does in Goethe's *"Das Märchen."*

Perrault's 17th-century *"La Belle au bois dormant,"* the third in Travers's series, is still a story about the Prince but with an added character (an ogreish mother-in-law) and a coda: after waking the Princess the Prince moonlights with her only to have his mother discover the cause of his absences. Here the hero who has ridden the momentum of rising good fortune grows slack and easygoing. His comeuppance occurs when his mother demands that the steward serve her the Sleeping Beauty and her children at supper. The steward hides them away and provides substitutes, and the Queen Mother's designs are finally revealed. The Prince feels shame at the self-indulgence that has caused all this and mends his ways.

In the fourth version in Travers's book, *"Sol, Luna, e Talia"* from the Italian *Pentamerone of Giambattista Basile*, it is the common man who rides the wheel of fortune to his ascendancy. Instead of Perrault's steward it is the cook who hides away the Sleeping Beauty and her children. The Prince rewards this man according to his merit, and with a mind free of class prejudice makes him a Gentleman of the Bedchamber.

In the Irish version by Jeremiah Curtin, "The Queen of Tubber Tintye," the Prince is assisted not by a lone cook but by a legion of helpers. In this tale the Prince attracts people of wisdom, gives the experts a free hand, and exercises self-restraint in the face of pretenders. The result is that almost everyone's lottery ticket comes in and a druidic spell is lifted from the Prince's mother and aunts, miscellaneous princes and all of Erin and the Lonesome Island.

The sixth Bengal version, "The Petrified Mansion" by F.B. Bradley-Birt, shows how everyone joins in the upward movement of the Sleeping Beauty's tale. Here, surely, the Prince is an Arhat who comes out of his forest retreat and returns to the here and now to help others. In this tale he is called the "deliverer" because he awakens a petrified world. This means good fortune for all. Others are drawn to follow his example, retreating for meditation deep in the forest in the same way that the sun of spring and summer begins to retreat at solstice.

Following her own version of the story and preceding the others Travers has inserted an Afterword. When she begins to explain the devices she has used in her story and to draw parallels with the Hindu goddess Kali or with Robert Graves's White Goddess, she seems guilty of reviewing her own book. It is as if Travers had forgotten that the fairy tale is like a Zen *kōan* and books that explain the meanings of *kōans* are the importunities of those who refuse their oracular pointedness. When a gifted storyteller like Travers begins to wrestle with meanings one suspects that the Thirteenth Fairy has laid the curse of criticism upon her. But in the Sleeping Beauty the Twelfth Fairy delays giving her blessing in order to mitigate the original curses from death to sleep; in Travers's case the Twelfth Fairy has turned the urge to explain into the urge for meditative musing: "What is it in *us* that at a certain moment suddenly falls asleep? Who lies hidden deep within us? And who will come at last to wake us, what aspect of ourselves?" Travers's curse and blessing is her Sultana's conviction "that fairy tales are not as simple as they appear." □

THE WISDOM

Find the island. You will know it
for the shore is too rocky for landings
and a yellow flag waves from the peak
of its one small mountain. Go there
by balloon. The balloon must be striped
and of many colors. I have seen
the perfect one floating near
my house. We can find its owner
together, and he will give it
gladly. When you land
use the silk for adornment.
You will not need a house or a hut
or clothing, for the weather is perfect,
always. And when one evening you hear
the voices of children,
I will come. We will begin to discover
the wisdom, to create the seasons.

Susan Bartels

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

There is an important exhibition of "7 American Women: the Depression Decade" at Vassar College Art Gallery (until March 5). Attempts to find a place in New York for it have not succeeded, but it will be a great pity if it is not made available to the city's larger audience. Not many exhibitions present an entirely unfamiliar group of interesting works, assembled from various sources, and this is one. It was arranged by Karal Ann Marling and Helen A. Harrison, under the sponsorship of A.I.R., the women artists cooperative gallery. This extension of A.I.R.'s activity into the study of historical art has been discerningly funded by the New York State Council on the Arts. The show is a double revival, of a group of women artists and of an aspect of the Federal Arts Program. The women in the show, to quote Marling, "all worked for one or another of the New Deal patronage agencies."

The artists were bound by a common desire to produce an "accessible" art, to pick up a word that occurs several times in the catalogue. This meant working in ways beyond the so-called privacy of easel painting, which was identified with personal expression at the expense of social connections. They were mural painters, sculptors, or print makers. The show obviously cannot present large works; some, in fact, are no longer extant. But their publicly oriented statements can be seen in sketches and inferred from small works in which is displayed the fundamental legibility of imagery that was so evidently sought. In this respect the show can be compared to the studies for murals by Stuart Davis at the Zabriskie Gallery (until February 14).

The definition of public art varies from artist to artist. For two of those shown at Vassar it meant murals for civic buildings and housing projects. Here the model of the Mexican Mural Movement was central, representing as it did an exceptional if momentary convergence of the interests of art and state. Lucienne Bloch was an assistant to Diego Rivera, and Marion Greenwood actually worked for the Mexican Government. Bloch is represented by sketches for murals at the House of Detention for Women ("School, Childhood, Family") and at the George Washington High School ("The Evolution of Music"). In both there is a cogent use of exemplary tableaux to indicate the social context of

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the phases of everyday life. Greenwood's sketches cover Mexican and North American schemes, including expressive types and individuals, for a social room at a New Jersey housing estate. The three-dimensional equivalent of the wall-scaled mural is monumental sculpture, represented here by Concetta Scaravaglione, like Greenwood a member of the Architect, Painters, and Sculptors Collaborative. She achieved a mode of public address by combining streamlined volumes with an accessible imagery of women and animals.

Elizabeth Olds's route to a popular audience was not by monuments (which often remain unrealized or, if built, are vulnerable to later changes of taste and building use) but by multiples. She believed in democratizing art by prints in editions as numerous as possible and with an iconography of social comment to match their wide distribution. Helen Harrison interprets one of Olds's lithographs, "Burlesque" (1939), as follows: "The mask-like faces of the women, handled in an exaggerated, expressionistic manner, are extremely vital and threatening. Their appearance is in direct contrast to the flaccid passivity of the male spectators at their feet." She is right about the front-row spectators, but the repetition of pose in the chorus line seems to me brutally mechanized: that is to say, the girls have been dehumanized by their occupation. Both sexes lose. One of the interesting aspects of the show is the use of the machine aesthetic: frequently it is the optimistic means of social change, but sometimes, as here, it is the image of loss of humanity and feeling.

Other artists formulated iconographic programs expressly to embody forms of social consciousness. Minna Citron displays a variant of the 14th Street style, an urban realism based on local life, like Isabel Bishop and Reginald Marsh. Doris Lee stresses vernacular-popular subjects, like an updated Currier and Ives. One of the paintings in the show, "Catastrophe" (1936), a celebrated painting in its day because it was reproduced in *Life*, catches her mood exactly. It is a patterned view of New York from out in the bay, with a bright scatter of, one suddenly realizes, parachutes, and in the sky a burning Zeppelin. Only one of the artists, Rosalind Bengelsdorf, departs from the area of American genre and allegory: her style is out of Picasso and the early work of Arshile Gorky. However, she has been no less neglected than the representational artists. One reason for this is the "triumph" of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s which obliterated its predecessors like a flash of light. Our full sight is only now returning and with it the panorama of pre-Abstract Expressionist art. It was not only representational and narrative art that suffered but also the international geometric style of the American Abstract Artists group, of which Bengelsdorf was a member.

Marling, drawing for her comments on census reports of 1930 and 1935, notes that "women were prominent in the visual arts to a greater extent than they were in the labor force as a whole." However this is not reflected in our present view of the decade. Although the rehabilitation of the representational styles of the period, both American Scene and Social Realist painting, has begun, this exhibition, with its exceptionally informative catalogue, is the first to retrieve any women artists. One reason for their neglect is the backlash against women's professionalism which one had supposed began in the 1940s, but which Marling convincingly locates in the 1930s. There has been therefore a convergence of art history and sexual prejudice that acted to exclude these women from the record of American art. (The catalogue is available for $3.50 from A.I.R. Gallery, 97 Wooster Street, New York, N.Y. 10012.) □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

It is difficult to review *A Matter of Gravity* because it has so little weight (Broadhurst Theatre). Yet one is obliged to notice it because of its star, Katharine Hepburn, and its author, Enid Bagnold.

In both cases the eminence is more personal than professional. Katharine Hepburn is a national institution. Audiences all over the country flock to see her. It is quite possible that even here in New York, and with a far from enthusiastic press, *A Matter of Gravity* may have a respectable run. It is a triumph of virtue.

Hepburn is clean. One thousand per cent American, there is an aura of good will and gallantry about her. She is liberal in demeanor and instinct without the slightest trace of parade. She is aglow with good breeding. At an advanced age she is seemingly ageless: lean, spry, agile, intrepid. No matter that her speech is flat, her voice tinny, her acting inconspicuous. The personal quality supersedes all. In a shabby time she shines immaculately, fulfilling a need her admirers can hardly define. It is a kind of undeclared patriotism. To be critical of her is to be suspect as a subversive.

Enid Bagnold, who wrote *National Velvet, Serena Blandish* and one good play, *The Chalk Garden*, is a true (English style) lady. She was a beauty in her youth and at 86 is still good-looking as well as doughty. She has lived among people of high society: the nobility, successful artists, diplomats with a touch of the bohemian about them. Like many aristocrats she combines a down-to-earth forthrightness with a peculiar vagueness and eccentricity, stylishly sustained.

Most of her plays and other writings are self-centered. She regards her persona with fascination as an amusing and amazing phenomenon. In *A Matter of Gravity* it becomes Mrs. Basil who lives in a shabby mansion (the room seen on stage has been handsomely designed by Ben Edwards), a mansion beautiful and decrepit, like England itself. Mrs. Basil is a Tory descended from a long line of the highborn. She clings to that tradition but is nonetheless permissive and curious about the raw vagaries of the contemporary young, without however forgoing her skepticism about them. She is willing to allow the new generation its chance in the hope that in time it may acquire greater steadiness and wisdom. She leaves her house to her descendants and takes up residence in an asylum.

Her grandson, to whom she bequeaths her estate, is a nonplussed graduate of Oxford; the girl he marries is a Jamaican whose father is black. She has little capacity for love, sexuality or the duties of motherhood. Her only marked attribute is her attraction to the glory that was (and still may be) England, of which Mrs. Basil's dwelling is an exemplar. That is why she married the indeterminate male from Oxford. Among the visitors at Mrs. Basil's are a dignified homosexual (apparently the only one capable of love), his pathological and semi-criminal consort, and a wealthy lady Oxonian lecturer of ascetically "progressive" convictions, ashamed of her possessions. Mrs. Basil's maid, also of genteel provenance, reputed to be a lesbian who adores her "boss," is endowed with the embarrassing faculty for ascending to the

"I AM THE PAINTER . . ."

I am the painter
so I am responsible
for the eyes,
for the black line
the devil touched.
Why I won't look away.

I am the one
who used brown instead of blue.

So don't laugh
and touch me.
You don't really understand this.
I have packaged my star
and put him inside you.
Now see how at home he is
in your arms.

Deborah Tall

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ceiling from time to time through spontaneous levitation—in short literally flighty as Mrs. Basil is only metaphorically so.

All this, it must be evident, is gently symbolic, a Tory tracery of the state of England today: the elderly retiring with relief in favor of the young, though uncertain that they will be able to manage the bequest. The difficulty is that Enid Bagnold has very little talent for making her vision dramatically arresting. Everything is set down in the most watery of water-color tints, with here and there a nice epigrammatic stripe. One has to strain oneself to catch the play's drift. What is suggested is more meaningful than what is seen or heard, and on the whole it is poorly acted. One wants to like the play more than one can. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

An earlier—1970—picture by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (see excerpts from Harold Clurman's review below) is *The American Soldier*, the director's salute to the gangster film. Judging from his appearance on the screen (here he plays the gangster's friend) Fassbinder must have begun haunting the movie houses some years after the Raft-Cagney-Muni-Robinson constellation set in the west, but somehow the clichés and stereotypes of Capone-era entertainment printed themselves on his young imagination.

The American soldier is in fact a German who, it seems, has been living in the States, where he picked up an American alias and the habit of wearing a gun in a shoulder holster; he fought in Vietnam (an anachronism, judging by the 1930s clothes he wears). Now he is back in Munich, and his arrival has set alarm bells ringing—a little like when the pale-faced stranger rides into Dry Gulch. Begins then a series of monosyllabic phone calls, rendezvous in seedy bars, a visit with mother ("Are you all right, Ricky?" "I'm fine, mama."), drives through rain-shiny streets in a big roadster, quick tricks with sad-eyed girls, evasive tactics against a trio from police headquarters who seem dim-witted but may be operating from mixed motives.

Ricky wears a snap-brim hat which he removes with the greatest reluctance, even in bed, drinks steadily from a bottle of something invariably referred to as "Ballantine" (his mother also drinks from a bottle, as does nearly everyone else in the picture). He enjoys the gift of instant sobriety, orders food he doesn't eat, sleeps almost not at all, never changes his clothes and remains alert and neat to the end. Those were the days!

What struck me as witty about *The American Soldier* was that it presents the iconography of a gangster film but no story. It's like one of those role-playing outfits we were given as kids: a box containing visored cap, badge, toy pistol in holster, whistle, tin handcuffs and a half-size night stick. The rest was up to the recipient. Similarly, Fassbinder provides the characters, props, basic encounters and general geographic layout for a gangland drama, but except that the American shoots someone in the stomach at fairly regular intervals, nothing happens. I assume he is saying that he used to put his games together from this package of toys and the audience is invited to do the same.

And what struck me as funny about the picture was that this homage to the American gang film is about as American as lederhosen. Fassbinder seems to have Dutch Schultz a little confused in his mind with Billy the Kid; his Munich has a small-town atmosphere; his chief of police looks and talks like a professor of entomology and his killer behaves with the depressed gravity of a traveling salesman in thin times. Our gangster heroes were great ones for slapping their women around, but I don't recall that they made a practice of shooting them in the belly, and a mobster without a henchman at his heels looks somehow underdressed. It isn't easy to ship the furniture of gangland overseas—what, for example, would be the Bavarian equivalent of Prohibition? Still, *The American Soldier* is an engaging, nostalgic squint through a cockeyed lens. I saw it during its recent brief run at the Film Forum, a club; if it shows commercially I recommend it to movie collectors.

Fassbinder's *Fist-Right of Freedom* (now more comprehensibly titled *Fox and His Friends*) was shown last fall at the New York Film Festival, when it was reviewed by Harold Clurman (*The Nation*, October 18). Mr. Clurman wrote, in part, as follows:

"[The film] centers on a homosexual as the sacrificial lamb of the corrupt rich. The original touch in this case is that the homosexual is a 'proletarian' [who is] lucky enough to win 500,000 marks in a lottery and becomes the consort of a young man whose family owns a bindery that is on the brink of bankruptcy. . . . Sincerely in love, the guileless youth . . . nevertheless finds himself embarrassing his 'partner' and his partner's parents by his uncouth table manners, his plebeian conversation, his ignorance. . . . His lover takes on another from his own well-heeled circle. He commits suicide.

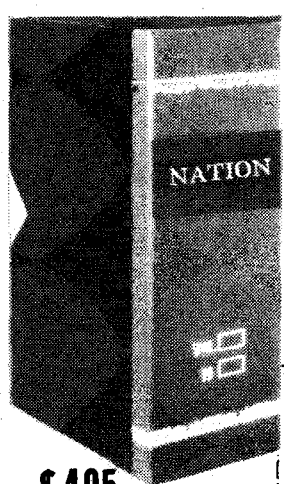
"The film is slickly made, well directed by Fassbinder, who acts the central role ably. . . . There is something pat about the whole presentation, so that it fails to stir or convince. The bourgeoisie in such films are always vicious, the poor always betrayed." □

GRACE
(Translated from the Estonian
by Henry Lyman)

The guise of shadow overgrows.
Lest radiance end in mold,
let rock be outward form,
the inward, springwater.

Springwater: the whispering idea,
the heart's easy grace.

Aleksis Rannit



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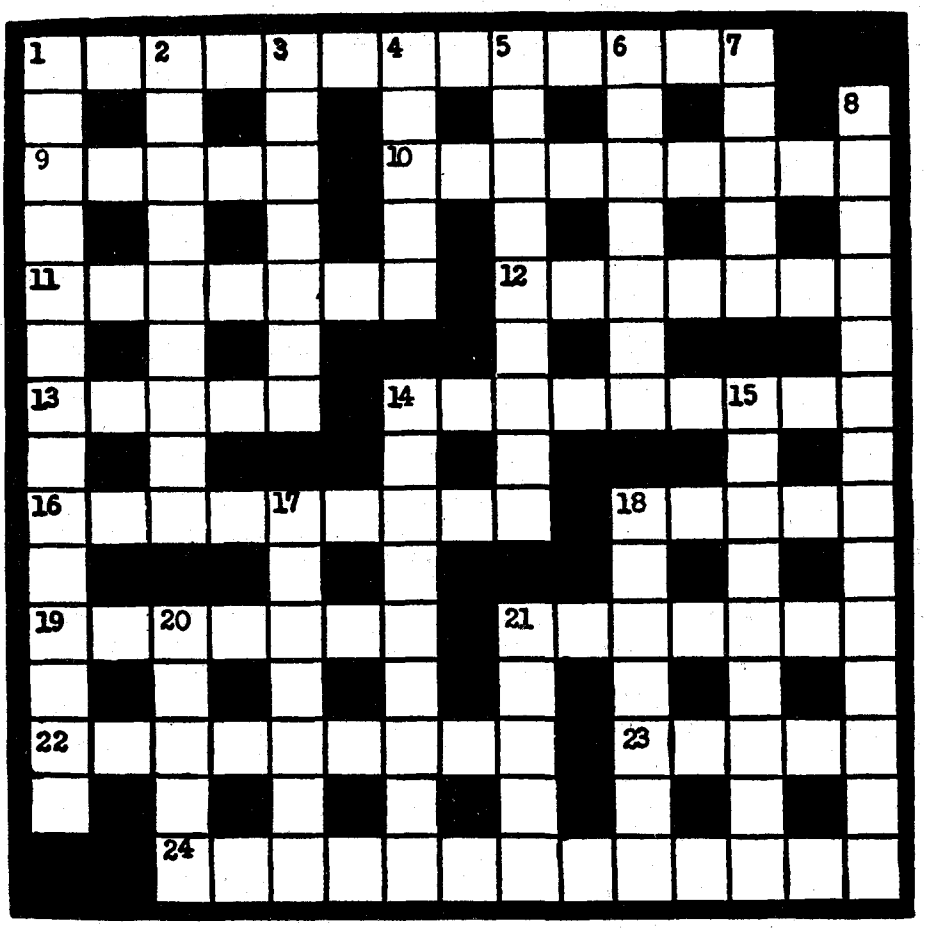

ACROSS

1 What happens with landing patterns might be a matter of stop and go. (7,6)
9 In the main, it should be jolly. (5)
10 What one of the mates saves up before a hitch could show either end of the twist on a painter. (9)
11 Oriental flower with a point on either side. (7)
12 The table is most upset with a worker being noisy or vulgar. (7)
13 It's soul-shattering when one is inside—it might make one either a saint or a king. (5)
14 What one might hit or deliver in disguise. (4,5)
16 Well-groomed flocks, or those that took care of them? (9)
18 Use foil to surround something—in case it's hot, one can handle it! (5)
19 One might get on in a month or so like 13, perhaps. (7)
21 Satisfied with what's inside? (7)
22 Left at sea in almost all comedy when properly behaved. (9)
23 The current amount to the French might be enough. (5)
24 One might take a stopwatch to the track workout to do it, but with 1 down it naturally follows. (3,3,4,3)

DOWN

1 Reputed woman-chasers that might cause 3 some concern. (5,5,4)
2 Argonauts might make a dash for some. (9)
3 Distant foreign seas, but they grow still. (7)
4 Break up a partnership in metals, copper being one of them. (3,2)
5 Smith's muscles were comparable, somewhat like press unions. (4,5)
6 Save the better half of 1 down's object of pursuit. (7)
7 Female graduate from Queensland? (5)
8 Polly has been asked to do it. (3,3,6,2)
14 Regular end to a district movement, perhaps. (9)
15 Traditional host. (9)
17 Being partly rich, or money-making, might get into the blood. (7)
18 Hot-dogs and beer at the game, served with flourish. (7)
20 In short, Tom, Dick or Harry. (5)
21 Acted like a would-be soldier. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1619

ACROSS: 1 Tattletale; 6 and 26 Somebody; 10 Opossum; 11 Amended; 12 and 23 down Book-of-the-Month Club; 14 Diehards; 15 Debris; 16 Uncaps; 18 Barn door; 22 Central heating; 24 Limited; 25 Retract; 27 Leaderless. DOWN: 1 Troubadour; 2 Twosome; 3 Loss of appetite; 4 Tempted; 5 Loaded; 7 Oldster; 8 Ends; 9 Before and after; 13 Ostrogoths; 17 Creamed; 19 Adhered; 20 Oxidate; 21 Saddle.

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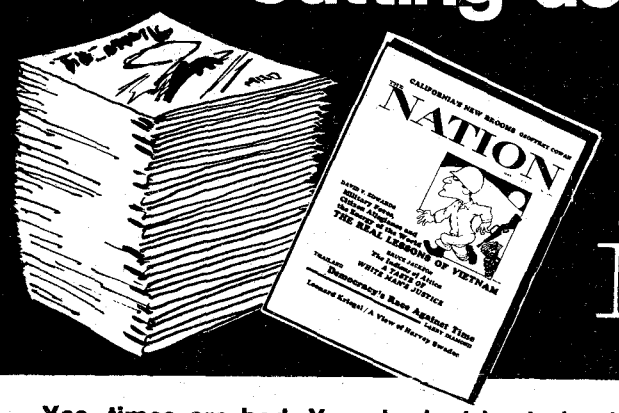

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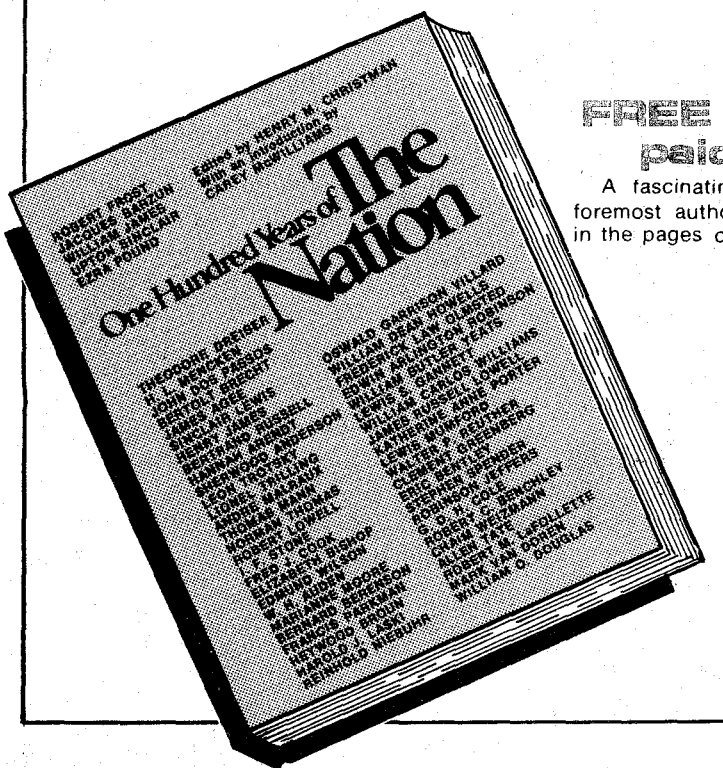

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